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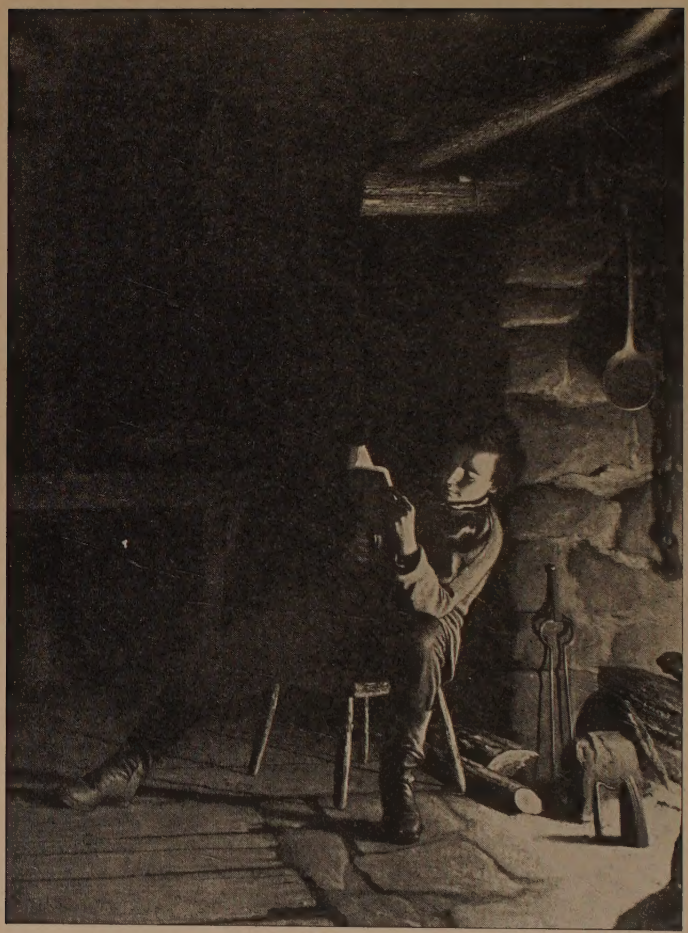

University of Michigan

"The Boyhood of Lincoln." Painting by Eastman Johnson.

A. LINCOLN

BY

ROSS F. LOCKRIDGE

AUTHOR OF
"HOW GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS
IN INDIANA," "GEORGE
ROGERS CLARK" AND "LA SALLE"

ILLUSTRATED

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NATIONS, like individuals, are no better than their ideals and their heroes. It is well for our country that for the representative of its ideals, for its most loved hero, it has Abraham Lincoln — tender, patient Lincoln, unselfish, unpretentious, jestful but serious, simple but wise, firm but forgiving, great but very near to us. Lincoln, as Walt Whitman said long ago, "seems like one living in our own house." True, the men who saw and knew Lincoln have perished all — or almost all; but still the feeling endures that in him "one of Plutarch's men talked with us face to face." It is to aid in maintaining the intimate Lincoln tradition and the Lincoln ideal that this little book has been prepared.

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TO

MY MOTHER

PREFACE

THE modern Lincoln quest is to know Lincoln personally. Studies are being especially directed toward disclosing the human elements that made Lincoln what he was. The Lincoln of history is well known; but the quest to find out how he became what he was is endless. For young students who are for the first time making his acquaintance, and for adult readers who do not wish to labor through critical biographies, a short and simple portrayal of the human aspects of the historic Lincoln may be helpful. The presenting of such a narrative is the object of this book.

The author has made an effort to seek out all the contacts of his life, particularly the more obscure ones. Almost every book of the many hundreds that have been written about Lincoln has been given more or less careful study. All the places in which he ever lived or where any important episodes in his life took place have been visited again and again. Above all else, all existing records of Lincoln's actual words have been carefully studied in their various relationships.

Abraham Lincoln is his own best biographer. It is fortunate that such a vast number and variety of his utterances have been preserved in perfect form. His letters, speeches, miscellaneous writings, and official documents make up an almost perfect autobiography. The author takes particular pride in the extensive use and arrangement of quotations from Lincoln. These have been placed so that they help build up the story of his life. They comprise the vital content of this book and should be read with thoughtful care. Such first-hand materials enable the reader to live with a great personality while he gets an intimate but objective view of history.

It would be impossible to enumerate with due credit all

the sources from which aid has been drawn. Valuable suggestions have been taken from many of the less known of Lincoln biographers. Especial benefit has been derived from better-known authors,. such as Nicolay and Hay, Tarbell, Barton, Sandburg, and Beveridge. For intimate information concerning Lincoln's Kentucky background and for valued personal counsel the author makes deep acknowledgment to Dr. Louis A. Warren, Director of the Lincoln Historical Research Foundation of the Lincoln National Life Insurance Company. A new book by William Henry Townsend, *Lincoln and His Wife's Home Town*, which appeared when this manuscript was practically complete, was studied with much benefit and pleasure. For the study of Lincoln's life in Indiana extensive use was made of Vannest's *Lincoln, the Hoosier*, and of the publications of the Indiana Historical Society and the Southwestern Indiana Historical Society. The author also wishes to express gratitude to William H. Stout of Indianapolis and to Dr. Charles Stoltz of South Bend for the use of their splendid private Lincoln libraries, and to Dr. James A. Woodburn and Dr. Christopher B. Coleman for personal encouragement and assistance.

Ross F. Lockridge

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INTRODUCTION

By James Albert Woodburn

Professor Emeritus of American History, Indiana University

Of making books on Lincoln there is no end, nor is there likely to be for years to come. I am told that there have been published about three thousand books on Lincoln; and perhaps every one of these books has its place, its reason for being. Every author has a message based on the text of this great life, and he feels the urge to tell the story. I feel sure that a book like this of Mr. Lockridge's will, like his *George Rogers Clark*, find a worthy place in biographical literature for the young and fill a useful function in the educational field.

The popular interest in Lincoln is perennial and unfailing. There is now more than ever widespread demand for the story that tells of the pioneer conditions in Kentucky and Indiana which produced Lincoln — that tells of his antecedents, his early life, his struggles and triumphs, of his historic work of Emancipation, and of his tragic death.

The era of the civil struggle in which the great humanitarian President figured so largely will always hold a place of first-rate importance in the history of America. For that reason Lincoln will always be an outstanding figure in our history. A thousand years from now his name will be among the precious few of his century to be known to history. It is quite certain that the interest in his life will continue for generations to come.

How diligently men have searched for information and new light on the life of Lincoln! It is a wondrous story from his humble origin to his seat among the mighty, to his long-suffering and patient work for the saving of the American Union and his great achievement for the exten-

sion of democracy and liberty throughout the world. Mr. Lockridge has told the story effectively. He has kept the man and the human element to the front. He has shown clearly that Lincoln came to be what he was by reason of his surroundings rather than in spite of them. The Latin poet sang of "arms and the hero"; Mr. Lockridge tells the story of pioneer conditions as well as of the man. The one was the product of the other. Together they make a tale that cannot be too often told to the young people of America.

Mr. Lockridge has informed himself well about Lincoln. He is an omnivorous reader and a dynamic worker. He is a man of ready speech and of facility in writing, possessing a real art for popular presentation. While his function is not that of a higher critic or of a special investigator, he yet seeks carefully to avoid error, and he grasps well the salient features of his subject. He reads and searches diligently for information, and seizing upon the essentials of his theme he tells his story in a style easily read and within the grasp of his readers' powers.

A. Lincoln is primarily educational. The author's object is to present a book that can be used to advantage as a supplementary text among school children in grades corresponding to those of the junior high school. I think he has successfully accomplished his purpose, and it is a pleasure to commend this volume to the teachers and students for whom it is intended. The book is written for students who are coming into their first knowledge of Lincoln and who are being introduced to their first serious study of American history. No better theme could have been chosen for such an introduction than the story of Lincoln; and that theme is here presented in a way that should prove interesting and helpful to young students. It will be found that a book which excites the interest of young people is a good book for the perusal of their elders.

A. LINCOLN

CHAPTER ONE

A SON OF THE WEST

ABRAHAM LINCOLN came out of the West. The West that gave us Lincoln was the solid Revolutionary West, won by the valor of George Rogers Clark and the adventurous Daniel Boone. It was that section bounded and threaded by those famous Western waters — the Great Lakes, the Kentucky River, the Ohio, the Wabash, and the Mississippi.

Clark's conquest of the Old Northwest had taken place mostly on the soil of the three states that gave us Lincoln — Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois. During Clark's last days, which were spent at or near the falls of the Ohio, the Kentucky boy, Abraham Lincoln, crossed the Ohio to make his home in the Old Northwest, which had been dedicated to human liberty and popular government by the Ordinance of 1787. Already Daniel Boone had left his loved Kentucky. Crowded out by land grafters, he was seeking elbow-room just beyond the Mississippi, where he lived, almost as Lord Byron sang of him, "hunting up to ninety."

When Clark died in 1818 at Locust Grove, Kentucky, and Boone in 1820 in Missouri, Lincoln was a tall, lanky boy growing up in southern Indiana, a new state just formed from the heart of the Northwest Territory. Who can doubt that this elemental background went into the very fiber and being of

this man through whom more than any other single instrument the destiny of greater America was to be realized?

Abraham Lincoln was descended from American pioneers. Our first American Lincoln was Samuel, a weaver who came from England and landed at Hingham, Massachusetts, May 26, 1637. For five generations after him, including that of Abraham, the family had moved constantly westward. For five generations each successive head of the Lincoln family had been born in one state, married in another, and died in a third. The following table shows the constancy with which the Lincolns followed the "star of empire":

	Born	Married	Died
Mordecai	Massachusetts	New Jersey	Pennsylvania
John	New Jersey	Pennsylvania	Virginia
Abraham	Pennsylvania	Virginia	Kentucky
Thomas	Virginia	Kentucky	Illinois
Abraham	Kentucky	Illinois	District of Columbia

The century and a half that passed between Mordecai Lincoln and the death of his great-great-grandson, Abraham, witnessed the making of the United States of America. To this making no one, with the possible exception of George Washington, contributed more than did Abraham Lincoln, a typical son of the West.

Our interest in the Lincoln genealogy begins with Abraham, the grandfather, who migrated to Kentucky in 1780. There was an interesting connection between this migration and the stirring adventures of Daniel Boone. The Lincoln and Boone families

had been intimate friends and neighbors far back in Pennsylvania days, and there was a distant relationship between them. No less than seven intermarriages between the Boones and Lincolns have been traced. The Lincolns felt the lure of the picturesque example of Daniel Boone. It was this which first tempted Grandfather Abraham to look with longing eyes toward Kentucky.

There was an even closer connection between this westward migration of the Lincolns and the Revolutionary achievements of George Rogers Clark. The Lincoln migration had been made possible by the capture of Vincennes by George Rogers Clark in 1779 — the crowning episode in the conquest of the Old Northwest. This decisive victory broke up the mighty Indian confederacy by means of which England was sweeping over Kentucky and threatening the Allegheny frontiers. The winning of Vincennes thereby saved Kentucky and made its settlement secure — though far from safe. This victory was followed by a great flood of immigration to Kentucky, mostly from Virginia.

Among twenty thousand settlers who came into Kentucky in 1780 was Grandfather Abraham, followed by his family in 1782. He was evidently a man of substance in Virginia. His 240 acres of Virginia land sold for five thousand pounds, which at that time was the equivalent of about seventeen thousand dollars. Aspiring to be a large landholder in Kentucky, he bought up extensive tracts on the Kentucky River, Green River, and Floyd's Creek — altogether 5544 acres.

It should be noted that no part of Kentucky was free from spasmodic Indian raids until many years after the close of the American Revolution, although its settlement had been guaranteed by George Rogers Clark. Daniel Boone was to recall many times the quaint warning of Chief Dragging Canoe, spoken when the Cherokees gave the deed to Transylvania, which included most of Kentucky, in the Sycamore Shoals Treaty on the Watauga River in 1775. Taking Boone by the hand, he said, "Brother, we have given you a fine land, but I believe you will have much trouble in settling it." He gave added warning in an after remark that it was "dark and bloody ground." Between 1783 and 1790 many thousands of men, women, and children were slaughtered by Indians in Kentucky, thousands of horses were stolen, and much property was taken or destroyed, according to Volume III of the Virginia Calendar. It was said that a Kentuckian could hardly pass a spot of his domain that was not soaked with the blood of a father, mother, husband, wife, or child. The family of the Kentucky patriarch of the Lincolns learned too well the truth behind this saying.

Nearly all the settlers were living inside forts or fortified stations, of which there were about sixty scattered through northern and central Kentucky at that time. In 1784, although there were about thirty thousand people in Kentucky, only eighteen houses stood outside of stations. Grandfather Abraham lived with his family in one of the eight cabins in Hughes Station and farmed his land on Long Run, a half mile away.

One day, in the planting season of 1786, about May or June, he was putting out a crop, assisted by his three sons, Mordecai, Josiah, and Thomas, when he was fired upon from ambush and instantly killed. Mordecai, the eldest son, ran to a little cabin near by to get his father's rifle; Josiah ran to Hughes Station for help; while the youngest son, Thomas, remained at the side of his stricken father. A painted redskin rushed out of the thicket, intending, no doubt, to scalp the father and tomahawk the child; but Mordecai took aim with his rifle at a silver spangle on the breast of the savage and shot him

Courtesy of Filson Club

Long Run Baptist Church, standing on the spot where Grandfather Lincoln was buried. He was killed at or near this place. It is just off the county road near Long Run about two miles north of where this road intersects United States Highway No. 60, eighteen miles east of Louisville. The Lincoln cabin stood a few rods from here, and Hughes Station was about a half mile northeast.

dead. Riflemen from the fort drove the other Indians away.

Grandfather Abraham was forty-two years of age at the time of his death. He left a widow with five children — the oldest, a boy of fifteen; the youngest, a girl of six. He died without a will, and all his land went to the eldest son, Mordecai. This was according to the law of primogeniture, which had just been abolished in Virginia but seemed to be prevailing still in the westernmost counties of Kentucky. The widow, Bersheba Lincoln, struggled to maintain a home for the younger children as best she could. She removed soon after her husband's death to Beech Fork in Washington County, then a part of Nelson County. The estate was administered in court at Bardstown three years later.

The very year of 1786, in which Grandfather Abraham was killed, witnessed one of the last military efforts of General George Rogers Clark. The frequent occurrence of such tragedies as that of Abraham Lincoln caused the Kentuckians to rise in their own defense. General Clark organized and conducted an offensive campaign against the Wabash Indians beyond the Ohio. It was quite fitting that the widow, Bersheba Lincoln, should contribute an excellent gun, appraised at eight pounds value on the subscription list, for the support of Clark's expedition.

Mordecai Lincoln grew up to be a rather notorious rough-and-tumble fighter. The fury aroused in him by the killing of his father made him a terror to red men ever afterwards. Whenever he heard

The cabin at Beechland, Washington County, Kentucky, in which Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks were married and where they probably kept house for a while. The cabin has since been moved to Harrodsburg, Kentucky, and preserved as a memorial.

of Indians in his vicinity, he went after them with rifle, knife, and tomahawk. He possessed all the fighting qualities of the Lincolns, which his nephew Abraham suggested so mildly in his autobiography: "The family were originally Quakers, though in later times they have fallen away from the peculiar habits of that people." This was the experience of most of the Quakers who came to Kentucky in those days; Daniel Boone himself had been raised a Quaker. When Lincoln was proposed as a candidate for Vice President in the convention of 1856, a delegate shouted the question, "Can Lincoln fight?" Another delegate jumped nearly two feet from the floor and, shaking both fists, shouted back, "Yes, sir! He is a son of Kentucky!'

It seems that Mordecai Lincoln was a man of considerable force and influence wherever he lived. His nephew Abraham said in later life that "Uncle Mord had run off with all the talents of the family." He lived in Kentucky most of his life, but died in Illinois. Josiah, the other brother, made his last home on Blue River in Harrison County, Indiana. The two sisters married in Kentucky and spent their lives there. There is no record that their nephew Abraham ever had much, if any, association with the families of his father's brothers and sisters.

Upon no member of this pioneer family did the tragic death of the father fall more heavily than upon Thomas Lincoln. He was the fourth child and the youngest son. Born on Linville Creek in Rockingham County, Virginia, in 1776, he was but ten years old when he saw his father killed. Although the widowed mother did her best to make a home for her children, it seems that the youngest son was practically thrown upon the world at the age of ten. Left mainly to his own resources, he worked and wandered as he developed with the growing West.

Years after the death of Thomas Lincoln his illustrious son wrote this brief statement of his father's strenuous boyhood: "By the early death of his father, and very narrow circumstances of his mother, even in childhood he was a wandering laboring boy and grew up literally without education." But it was through this boy, Thomas, that the Lincoln name was to go grandly down the ages.

CHAPTER TWO

KENTUCKY DAYS

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was born in old Kentucky, near Hodgenville, on February 12, 1809. His birthplace was a log cabin standing by an ever-flowing rock spring near the South Fork of Nolin Creek in Hardin, now Larue, County.

The place of Lincoln's birth is now a famous memorial site containing 110½ acres of the original Lincoln farm of 348½ acres. The very cabin in which he was born is preserved as a part of this memorial. There is a beautiful driveway, an attractive plaza, and a broad stairway which gently ascends the hill where the old log cabin is to be found enclosed in a stone structure of classic style.

Three Presidents of the United States have visited this site and participated in the different stages of its dedication. On February 12, 1909, the one-hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth, President Roosevelt laid the cornerstone; President Taft dedicated the memorial structure on November 9, 1911; and President Wilson formally accepted on behalf of the nation the site of the cabin and the farm from the Lincoln Farm Association, on February 4, 1916. On this occasion President Wilson used these significant words:

> Here Lincoln had his beginnings. Here the consummation of that great life seems remote and a bit incredible. And yet there was no break anywhere between beginning and end, no lack of natural sequence anywhere. Nothing

really incredible happened. Lincoln was unaffectedly as much at home in the White House as he was here.

Abraham was the second child of Thomas and Nancy Hanks Lincoln, who were married in Beechland in Washington County, Kentucky, June 12, 1806, when Thomas was thirty years of age and Nancy Hanks twenty-two. Official records of this marriage were not found until 1882.

The ceremony was performed by the Reverend Jesse Head, a Methodist minister who is buried at Harrodsburg, Kentucky. He was a noted character of that period, known at different times as a farmer, cabinetmaker, justice of the peace, postmaster, town trustee, and editor, as well as preacher. Although he was a slave owner in a small way at one time, his descendants have always made the claim that he opposed slavery and helped plant the seeds of abolition in the hearts of Lincoln's parents.

The historic June-day wedding of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks seems to have been celebrated in hearty pioneer fashion. It was an occasion of feasting and merriment. One of the guests, Dr. C. C. Graham, gave the following account of it in 1884 — his one-hundredth year:

I saw Thomas Lincoln marry Nancy Hanks on the twelfth day of June, 1806. I was at the infare, too, given by her guardian, John H. Parrott; and only girls with money had guardians appointed by the court. We had bear meat that you eat the grease of, and it does not rise like other fats; venison, wild turkey, and ducks; eggs wild and tame (so common that you could buy them at two bits a bushel); maple sugar strung on a string to bite off for coffee and whisky; syrup in big gourds; peach-and-

honey; a sheep that the two families barbecued whole over coals of wood burned in a pit and covered with green boughs to keep the juices in; and a race for the whisky bottle.

Some critics challenge the old man's memory.

The maternal ancestry of Abraham Lincoln is not easily traced. There were several families of the name of Hanks in Kentucky at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and all of them were related; but the relationship is confusing. The Hanks had come to Kentucky from Virginia a few years after the Lincolns. Nancy Hanks was born in Virginia and brought to Kentucky when a small child. She seems to have been reared as an orphan in the home of her aunt and uncle, Richard and Rachel Berry. She was married in their home — a log cabin, which has been moved to Kentucky Pioneer Memorial Park at Harrodsburg and enshrined in a brick structure known as the Lincoln Marriage Temple. As to the obscurity of her ancestry, we may let her speak for herself, as Plutarch does the mother of Themistocles:

> I am not of the noble Grecian race.
> I'm poor Ambrotonon, and born in Thrace;
> Let the Greek women scorn me, if they please;
> I was the mother of Themistocles.

During the twenty years that passed between the time that Thomas Lincoln became an orphan and the time he became the head of a family of his own, he battled with the hardships of pioneer life with at least a fair degree of success. Until he was nearly grown, he seems to have worked at common labor in

different parts of Washington County, Kentucky. In June, 1795, when nineteen years of age, he enlisted in the Fourth Regiment of the militia of Washington County, and served for a few months guarding the frontier against Indian troubles. In 1796 he worked for several months on a mill site in Hardin County at three shillings a day. In 1798 and 1799 he worked as a hired hand for an uncle, Isaac Lincoln, on the Watauga, a branch of the Holston River in Tennessee. There is reason to believe that at some time during this year's absence from Kentucky he may have made a trip with Daniel Boone to Missouri.

It is known that Thomas Lincoln took up the carpenter trade in 1797, during his twenty-first year, and worked at rough carpentering most of the time for about ten years. It cannot be found that he ever received anything from his father's estate; although it is possible Mordecai may have given him something from the sale of one of his father's farms. He must have saved and accumulated some money, for in 1803 he bought a farm of 238 acres on Mill Creek, Hardin County, for which he paid 118 pounds cash. The widowed mother and her youngest daughter moved from Washington County to this farm in 1803. It appears that Thomas made it a home for them and they made it home to him, though he never farmed the place. In 1803 he served as a guard of prisoners by appointment of the sheriff. In April, 1804, he petitioned for a road to be built past his Mill Creek farm to the county seat. This road is now part of the Dixie Highway between Elizabethtown and Camp Knox.

Russell T. Neville

The one-door, one-window log cabin in which Lincoln was born, as it is preserved within the marble shrine near Hodgenville.

In 1805 he served for three months as a patrol policeman, where his principal duty was to guard against the escape of runaway slaves.

It is probable that soon after the wedding Thomas Lincoln brought his bride to the Mill Creek farm where his mother lived. But they did not stay there long, for within the year he built a cabin on a lot which he owned in Elizabethtown, or E-town as it is generally called, where they began keeping house. It was in this cabin that their first child, Sarah, was born, February 10, 1807. He bought another lot in Elizabethtown while living there, but did not build upon it. In 1807 he built a saw mill in this same town on contract, for which he had to collect his money by suit in the court.

On December 12, 1808, Thomas bought a three-hundred acre farm (later found to be 348½ acres) on the South Fork of Nolin Creek, about three miles from Hodgenville and fifteen miles from Elizabethtown. Nolin Creek was about a mile and a half south of the cabin site. It is perhaps best known as the Rock Spring Farm, although it is sometimes called the Sinking Spring Farm. He paid two hundred dollars cash for it and assumed a small obligation from the former title holder. It was this obligation that clouded the title and made Thomas serious trouble later. Shortly before Christmas, 1808, he moved his family to this farm and began life as a farmer. It was here in the log cabin above the spring that Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, and lived a little over two years.

In May, 1811, Thomas Lincoln gained possession of another farm of 246 acres on Knob Creek about eight miles from Hodgenville, in the region of the Muldraugh Hills; and it was here that the third child, Thomas, was born and died in infancy. Thomas and Nancy Lincoln lived in three different log cabins in Kentucky: first in Elizabethtown, then on the South Fork of Nolin Creek, then on Knob Creek; and in each of these homes a child was born.

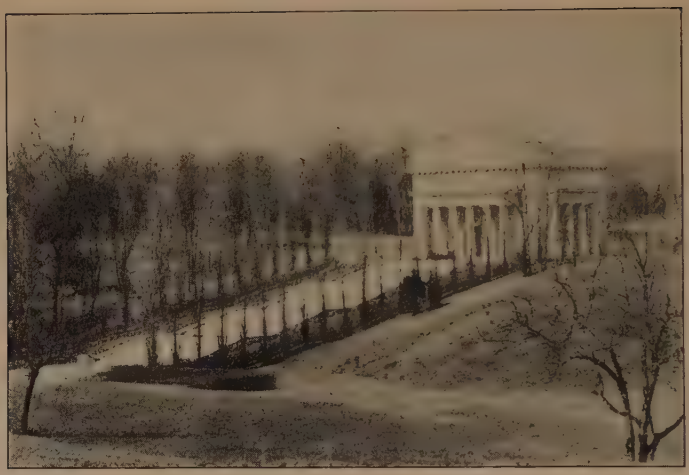
It was in this Knob Creek home that the child Abraham received his lasting impressions of Kentucky. He lived there over five years, from the beginning of his third year to near the end of his eighth year. This place was located on the road from Louisville to Nashville, about seventeen miles west of Bardstown. It was good farming land, and

the surrounding scenery was very picturesque. Great knobs rose about the home, almost mountainous in their proportions. Steep inclines led from their summits to the creek. It was a place of lofty bluffs and deep gorges — a region of that rugged beauty typical of the hills of Kentucky.

It should be remembered that although it was young, Kentucky was already a thoroughly established and growing commonwealth. It had been admitted to the Union in 1792, the first pioneer state of the West — the second to be admitted to the Union after the thirteen original colonies. The period in which Abraham Lincoln lived as a child in Kentucky was one of substantial pioneer growth and development. Covered-wagon days were never known in Kentucky. Long before the Conestoga wagon was made and roads laid out for it to travel, Kentucky was generally settled. Her winding trails had been traversed by pack-horse trains for many generations. During the seven years that Abraham Lincoln lived there, Kentucky was forming those unique characteristics for which it has always been famed.

Thomas Lincoln fought Indians while he was in the Washington County militia, and he hunted game for food; but the redskins were rapidly disappearing, and wild animals were becoming scarce. The spirit of freedom and of expansion was everywhere. Thomas Lincoln took a very active part in all this movement, and young Abe felt its influence in his childhood days.

While the Lincolns were living in Hardin County, there was in Elizabethtown an old ex-slave who had



The marble shrine near Hodgenville, Kentucky, which contains the log cabin birthplace of Lincoln. The cornerstone of this memorial was laid in 1909, the one-hundredth anniversary of Lincoln's birth. The project was entirely supported by popular subscription.

won his freedom because of his valor fighting Indians. Tradition credited him with having killed nine redskins while defending his master's home from Indian attacks. The rest of his days he strutted around E-town, garbed in a faded Revolutionary uniform and bearing the name of "General Braddock." Though his name was that of the ill-fated Britisher who is remembered mainly because of a terrible defeat which he received from the American redskins, it evidently sounded good to the heroic darky; and he bore it as proudly as he wore his American uniform. He was long a picturesque reminder of lurid Indian days in Old Kentucky.

The Lincolns lived in close contact with the life of the community. Each of their homes was near

a church and a distillery; none of them was far from a school and a race course. The Lincolns lived on main roads that Thomas helped build. Courts were operating regularly, and Thomas Lincoln frequently sat on the juries. Churches were spreading the gospel vigorously, and Thomas and Nancy were active church members. Within two miles of the Knob Creek home there was a distillery which was at one time the largest producer of pure liquor in the world. This was on the site of Athertonville, now a decaying village with several great distillery units slowly falling to ruins. In the days of Thomas and Nancy Lincoln, however, the distillery was an important element in the life of the community.

Kentucky elections were as spirited then as in later days. As early as 1783 George Rogers Clark made a memorandum that in the spring election for delegates to the Virginia Assembly "there were a number of fights in Louisville in which some good citizens were seriously injured, one having an eye gouged out, another a nose bitten off," etc. About the time Thomas Lincoln became a voter, a hot contest was on between the sites of Hodgenville and Elizabethtown for the location of the county seat of Hardin County. Of this, Samuel Haycraft wrote as follows:

> There was hot blood all the time from about 1794 to about 1803, each settlement believing they ought to have the county seat, and the controversy was bitter, and hostile feelings divided the two sections. But particularly at the annual elections the feelings could not be controlled, and during that period there were at least fifty combats of fist and skull, there being pistols, knives, brass knucks,

or slungshots used in those days. The only unfair weapon used, to my knowledge, was by a young man named Bruce, who had his shoes pointed with iron or steel something like gaffs, being himself addicted to chicken fighting.

Kentucky is still famous for her splendid horses and her spirited races; near the old Lincoln farm there is a Knob Creek Stock Farm, which is today producing some of the finest saddle horses in the world. There were "race paths" in many places in Hardin County when Abraham Lincoln was growing up, and there was an annual Hardin County Derby, which was one of the very creditable forerunners of the now world-famed Kentucky Derby. The jockeys wore silk or satin jackets and colored caps. The course where this annual classic was conducted was known as Martin's Turf. It was a famous racing center located at Middle Creek, about eight miles from the Lincoln farm and halfway between Elizabethtown and Hodgenville. It operated under the rules of the Lexington Jockey Club. Thomas Lincoln was a lover and breeder of horses, although it is not known that he took part in the races.

In this early period the rude sports of the day were at their height throughout Old Kentucky. Picnics, barbecues, Fourth of July celebrations, and dances were much in evidence. Pioneer contests such as wrestling, lifting, running, and jumping were practiced wherever groups of men got together. Card playing was popular and, according to a local historian, there was considerable "pokering" in Elizabethtown. Public exhibitions of a rude and simple nature were frequent. Rope walkers, sword swal-

lowers, sleight-of-hand jugglers, and fortune tellers were numerous. Before little Abraham was a year old, it is believed that he was taken to Elizabethtown by his parents to see the elephant at a one-animal menagerie, the first circus of the kind to visit that community. A great Fourth of July celebration which was held in Elizabethtown in 1807, while the Lincolns lived there, was famed in the history of that part of Kentucky for generations afterward.

During that time one of the main public issues of Elizabethtown was the question as to whether or not public balls should be held in the courthouse. Contending factions battled back and forth over the question, winning or losing according to the degree in which the presiding judge favored dancing or the extent to which he was controlled by prohibitive rules of the church.

At this time Kentucky had already started a substantial public school system, providing for forms of instruction from the most elementary to university work. Old Transylvania was then in its zenith — the first institution of higher learning west of the Allegheny Mountains. Secondary schools were springing up everywhere in the form of academies established by the state. The Elizabethtown Academy was established in 1799. In 1806 a new schoolhouse was erected, which it is thought Thomas Lincoln helped to build. This was replaced in 1814 by a pretentious new brick building, which young Abe probably saw many times. It was the pride of the community. Some noted teachers came there and gave instruction in many of the higher branches.

Primary schools were established in all the growing communities. There was one — a log cabin — located two miles east of the Knob Creek home, just down the hill from the present site of the Athertonville schoolhouse near the fork of Cumberland Road and Pottinger Creek.

It was here that Abe, with his sister Sarah, who was two years older than he, first attended school. We know that he had two different teachers, Zachariah Riney and Caleb Hazel. Not much is known about these men beyond the facts that they could teach the rudiments of reading, writing, and arithmetic; that Riney was a Catholic; and that Hazel was a close friend and neighbor of the Lincolns and was a pronounced anti-slavery man.

Perhaps the strongest Kentucky influence to enter the life of the Lincolns was the church. Thomas and Nancy became members of the Little Mount Church, a Baptist organization which had been established a few miles from their Knob Creek home shortly before they moved there. It had been built by a group of fifteen emancipationists who, because of their views on slavery, had left the South Fork Baptist Church near the Lincoln home on Nolin Creek on July 3, 1808.

Two ministers who served in this church stood out in the life and memory of the Lincolns. These were William Downs and David Elkins. Neither of them had much general learning, but both were well versed in the Scriptures and both possessed rare natural gifts of brightness of intellect and power of expression. Though indolent, slovenly, and unor-

thodox in habits, they were great orators, earnest expounders of the gospel, and most pronounced in their anti-slavery sentiments. Nearly all the Kentucky churches, particularly the three in the neighborhood of the Lincoln homes, were most vigorous in their opposition to slavery. They were also quite restrictive in their attitude toward excesses of all kinds. While they countenanced drinking, they were severely against habitual intoxication. They opposed dancing and denounced gambling in every form. This extended even to racing, although most of the prominent church members supported it.

The fact that all of the rude, rough, frontier spirit of the day was then rampant throughout Kentucky should be given consideration in studying the life of Abraham Lincoln. The influences that governed the life and habits of his parents and determined the atmosphere of their home must have gone into the spirit of the growing boy.

Thomas Lincoln was a genuine Kentuckian. He touched life there at all its essential points. He knew hardships, sacrifices, and successes. He was a mild, peaceable man, easy-going and good-natured. He had a powerful physique and could hold his own under any circumstances. Thomas was a worthy survivor of a breed of westward-moving pioneers, with whom "the cowards never started and the weak ones died by the way." He was a taxpayer and freeholder, as we learn from extant records of his having served on juries in 1803, 1804, 1807, 1808, 1811, and 1812. Only freeholders could serve on juries. He heard important cases argued by leading

lawyers of the day — Kentucky was famed even then for her eloquent attorneys and profound jurists. His name appeared frequently on marriage bonds and appraisals of estates. His name first appears, written in his own bungling hand, on a marriage bond in 1801, five years before his own wedding.

His last public service in Kentucky was during 1816, the year he moved to Indiana. He was appointed road surveyor and was made responsible for the repair and improvement of about six miles of very difficult road between Bigg Hill and Rolling Fork, which is now a part of the Jackson Highway. This duty was very exacting, and others before him had been called to strict account for unsatisfactory service. Thomas Lincoln's service evidently proved satisfactory.

Whether or not Thomas Lincoln was a successful farmer, he was at least a representative landowner. The last year on Knob Creek before leaving Kentucky he raised about four hundred bushels of corn. He usually converted his corn into whisky, which was the best way to market it. He never sold "by the small." He probably took a dram occasionally, just as a farmer today drinks his own cider, but there is no record that he was ever intoxicated or ever acquired a drinking habit.

Thomas had worked side by side with slave labor on a mill site in Elizabethtown, and as a patrolman he had performed the distasteful duty of catching runaway slaves. He had sat under the fiery denunciations of human slavery from Kentucky pulpits. Slavery was really the dominant issue in the churches

of Kentucky when the Lincolns left there. In 1816, 1238 slaves were listed for taxes in Hardin County. There was a single owner who listed 53. More than half the total population was colored.

There can be no doubt that little Abe drank in the spirit of these Kentucky influences. His very hatred of slavery was deeply rooted in his Kentucky childhood. He said in later life: "I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel."

There were ample reasons why the Lincolns should have wished to leave Kentucky at this time for the new state of Indiana. The explanation of this migration given by Abraham in his autobiography was that "this removal was partly on account of slavery, but chiefly on account of the difficulty in land titles in Kentucky." Thomas Lincoln had had a great deal of trouble over confusion of titles for both the Nolin Creek and Knob Creek farms, and through no fault of his own was compelled finally to relinquish both of these. The fact that Kentucky had never instituted a general land survey was responsible for the disheartening troubles in land titles which overwhelmed Thomas Lincoln.

Abe's Kentucky days were those of happy childhood. He played among the Muldraugh Hills and fished and waded in the clear waters of Knob Creek. There is a well-supported tradition that he narrowly escaped drowning at least once, and the exact spot where he slipped off the end of a log into the swollen stream can be pointed out. However, after President Lincoln's death, so many men laid claim to having

saved him from drowning in his boyhood that Louis A. Warren, after a sincere investigation of all these Kentucky traditions, drew the facetious conclusion that "Abe must have been in deep water most of his days, beginning in early childhood."

During the War of 1812 Kentucky furnished many soldiers. The five-year-old Abe saw groups of them going and returning on the main highway past his Knob Creek home and was taught by his parents to honor them. He always remembered that once when returning from fishing he met a wounded man in uniform and proudly gave the soldier a fish that he had caught.

His Kentucky accent never left him, and Kentucky ways marked him all his life. After one of his first notable speeches in the Illinois Legislature in 1837 the *Sangamo Journal* of Springfield said: "Our friend carries the true Kentucky rifle and when he fires seldom fails of sending the shot home." His most heartfelt appeals all through the war were made to the border states and particularly to Kentucky. It was a common saying about the capital that "President Lincoln hopes he has God on his side, but thinks he must have Kentucky."

It is significant that less than a year before Lincoln's birth there was born many miles farther south another Kentucky boy, who was to be his greatest antagonist. This was Jefferson Davis, whose family moved out of Kentucky southward into Mississippi a few years before the Lincolns moved northward into Indiana. Kentucky has great claim to being the link between North and South. On her soil,

not far from Hopkinsville, a mighty monument rises, commemorating the site of the birthplace of Jefferson Davis. On her soil, near Hodgenville, stands the impressive memorial of the birthplace of Abraham Lincoln.

The time of the removal of the Lincoln family to Indiana has been pretty definitely fixed. Official records show that Thomas Lincoln was in Kentucky November 11, 1816, and was gone by December 20. It is less certain how the family traveled. There is little reason to believe, as was formerly claimed, that they went by water, embarking where Knob Creek joins Rolling Fork, and rafting down Rolling Creek to Salt Creek and thence to the Ohio at West Point. Thomas listed four head of horses for taxation that year; he probably went with some or all of these by the shortest land route — through Elizabethtown, past the old Mill Creek farm to Hardinsburg, then to Cloverport, and on to Hawesville. It is uncertain where they crossed the Ohio. The distance covered in reaching the Ohio probably did not exceed seventy-five miles and could have been made in less than a week. The trip from the old home in Kentucky to the new home in Indiana was less than a hundred miles.

Abraham remembered throughout his life and often spoke of his Knob Creek home. He remembered the giant oak trees which stood near the cabin, the inspiring scenery surrounding the home, and the actual plan of the farm. In a conversation with a citizen of Hodgenville who visited him at the White House in 1863, he said:

I remember that old home very well. Our farm was composed of three fields. It lay in the valley surrounded by high hills and deep gorges. Sometimes when there came a big rain in the hills the water would come down through the gorges and spread all over the farm. The last thing that I remember doing there was one Saturday afternoon; the other boys planted the corn in what we called the big field — it contained seven acres — and I dropped the pumpkin seed. I dropped two seeds every other row. The next Sunday morning there came a big rain in the hills; it did not rain a drop in the valley, but the water coming down through the gorges washed ground, corn, pumpkin seed, and all, clear off the field.

It is upon this childhood background that the proud commonwealth of Kentucky bases its claim to Lincoln.

CHAPTER THREE

IN EARLY INDIANA

ABRAHAM LINCOLN became a Hoosier in his eighth year. "We reached our new home," he said in his autobiography, "about the time the state came into the Union. It was a wild region with bears and other wild animals still in the woods."

It was during that summer that the buckskin-clad makers of Indiana's first constitution finished their work under the old elm tree at Corydon, some sixty miles east of the new Lincoln home. Under that constitution slavery was never to be admitted into Indiana, according to the requirement of the Ordinance of 1787. The new state consisted of thirteen counties along the Ohio River. Her new seal very fittingly depicted a woodsman chopping down a tree at early sunrise and a buffalo fleeing toward the west.

The Lincolns found their new home about sixteen miles north of the river, in Spencer County, then a part of Warrick. It was "in an unbroken forest, and the clearing away of surplus wood was the great task ahead." Only seven families lived in that section when the Lincolns came, but others kept coming steadily.

In order to transport their simple household goods from the river to the new home site Thomas Lincoln had to clear part of the way, and Abe helped him do it. "Abraham, though very young," Lincoln wrote in his autobiography, "was large for his age and had an ax put into his hands at once; and from that

time till within his twenty-third year he was almost constantly handling that most useful instrument."

It was late in November or early December when the Lincolns reached the site of their new home. It was too late to build a house for the winter; so a half-faced camp was constructed of poles and bark, in which they lived most of the winter of 1816–1817. One side of the camp was open. On this open side a fire was kept burning to maintain warmth within and to keep wild animals out.

Thomas Lincoln had about all he could do that winter to supply his family with food, which he did mainly by hunting. The woods were full of game, and Thomas Lincoln was a great hunter. His trusty rifle kept the table well supplied, mostly with venison. Although there was a lack of variety, food was plentiful. It is rather strange, however, that even in these circumstances young Abraham never became a hunter. He wrote in his autobiography:

> At this place Abraham took an early start as a hunter which was never much improved afterwards. A few days before the completion of his eighth year, in the absence of his father, a flock of wild turkeys approached the new log cabin and Abraham with a rifle-gun, standing inside, shot through a crack and killed one of them. He has never since pulled a trigger on any larger game.

During the winter Thomas did some clearing with Abe's help, getting ready to put out a small crop in the spring. Before spring the log cabin was built in which the Lincolns lived fourteen years — until they left Indiana for Illinois in 1830. The spot where the cabin stood was a little higher than the

clearing immediately surrounding it. It was almost a knoll and, except for some difficulty in obtaining water, was well suited for a home site.

The new log cabin was unusually light and roomy for that day, but there was not time to complete it the first summer. There were no floors and no doors or windows until sometime in 1818. Abe helped build their own and other log cabin homes.

Courtesy of Frank C. Ball

The Lincoln home in Spencer County, Indiana, as it appeared many years after the Lincolns left it.

He helped fell the trees and cut the logs for the little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, which was built about a mile from his home when he was ten years old. Thomas Lincoln was the boss carpenter for this building and Abe was a laborer with him. For the fourteen years of his life in Indiana, from the age of seven to the age of twenty-one, he was almost constantly employed in such hard and wholesome labor.

During this period he reached his full height of six feet four inches and his greatest weight and strength. The effect of this steady growth and development in the backwoods of Indiana remained with him through life.

The wild aspect of southern Indiana at the time when Lincoln was growing up is well reflected in a story that Mrs. Polly Richardson Agnew often told in later life. Some years after the Lincolns had come to southern Indiana, Polly Richardson came with her family to make a new home there. They brought part of their household goods up from the river and, after making a temporary lean-to, the men of the family left Polly and her mother and returned to the river for the remainder of the goods. A storm came up in the meantime, which made it impossible for the men to get back. As night was approaching, the frightened women saw a tall, gaunt boy, with a good face, coming toward them. He told them he would build a bonfire to keep away the wolves, which he said would be pretty thick around there soon after dark. When night came, the women saw glittering eyeballs all about them in the woods. They were terribly frightened, for they seemed surrounded by thousands of creatures moving stealthily through the dark. They were assured by their new friend, however, that there were not more than a half dozen of the "varmints" and that they were awful cowards. Abraham Lincoln, the frontier youth who had come to their assistance, took a firebrand and drove them to a distance, but kept watch during the night while Polly and her mother slept. These two families later became neighbors and close friends.

So far as we know, Abraham had no experience with Indians either in Kentucky or Indiana. Just four years before the Lincolns came, there had occurred the last terrible Indian uprising in southern Indiana — the massacre of Pigeon Roost. The Battle of Tippecanoe, which was fought in 1811, and of the Mississinnewa in 1812, were the last important Indian engagements on Indiana soil. After the beginning of statehood, Indiana's problem was to get the rest of her land from the Indians and remove them from the state.

Settlements grew rapidly throughout Spencer County and over all that part of the state. Soon after the coming of the Lincolns, William Jones started a store and called the little town that grew up in the vicinity Jonesboro. Later he and James Gentry went into partnership, the location of the settlement was shifted, and the name was changed to Gentryville. It was located about a mile and a half from the Lincoln home. Before long a blacksmith shop was opened there by John Baldwin, a few cabins were built, and the community grew to be the leading village of the section.

The village was the favorite loafing place on rainy days and often on week nights and Sundays. Abe met boon companions there and spent many spare hours at the blacksmith shop and the store, listening to the talk of others, telling stories, making jokes, and joining in the rude amusements of the good-natured gatherings at these places. He worked at different times for Jones and Gentry, but most of the time he was just a friendly visitor. The blacksmith was a

good story teller and was Abe's particular friend. It was in these gatherings that Abe first came in touch with community life. It was here that he heard the news in the common talk that was going round. Here he first read newspapers which came from Louisville and Vincennes.

This was a typical pioneer community. As more people came in, neighborhood life became broader and more active, and Abe developed with it. Being socially minded, he liked to mix in groups; he liked people, and people liked him; so whenever he could, he attended the frequent house raisings, husking bees, horse races, fox hunts, and rustic picnics.

His great height and length of limb gave him a vast physical advantage over most of his associates. He was easily a champion in running, jumping, wrestling, throwing weights, and lifting heavy bodies. He was particularly outstanding in " half hammon," which seems to have been a sort of hop, step, and jump. We can readily believe that Abe's long legs could cover an almost incredible distance in a hop, step, and jump.

His loosely built frame was unusually strong for his weight, for almost every pound was bone and muscle. He could strike heavier blows with the maul and sink the ax deeper into a tree than could any of his companions. Almost unbelievable stories have persisted in that community as to feats of strength he performed, such as carrying a corn crib that weighed over six hundred pounds entirely across the barn lot. This story cannot be fully vouched for; in fact, some reports made the building

a chicken house instead of a corn crib. But the tradition lives that he managed the load by an ingenious arrangement of straps and ropes whereby he secured enough leverage to lift and carry it.

He was a great wrestler and loved physical contests of this kind. There are also stories of his prowess in fighting, but it is hard to find that he ever did much fighting as a boy. There are the very best of reasons for believing that he seldom had a fight. In the first place he was naturally good-natured and friendly; and as he was so big and strong there was very little disposition on the part of anyone to annoy him. He was "too big to fight a boy and too young to fight a man," so it came about that he was more often peacemaker than participant in the rough-and-tumble fights that were frequent among his associates. He was always known, however, as a fellow who could, in the Hoosier vernacular, "tote his own skillet."

Abe's father, not having enough work to keep his son busy all the time, hired him out, commanding, as was customary, all the proceeds of the labor of a son under twenty-one. Abe worked at different times for several neighbors, sometimes plowing, hoeing, or harvesting, but more often working in the timber with ax and maul. He seems to have enjoyed working for the neighbors because it gave him new contacts. He was a favorite wherever he worked, largely because of his good nature and good stories.

He always liked to go to the mill to get the corn ground. There were several different mills where he is supposed to have gone, at distances of from three

to fifteen miles from the Lincoln home. Going to the mill was quite a trip in those days, and it usually took a long wait before the meal was ready. Abe enjoyed these waits, talking and playing with the men and boys at the mill. On one occasion at Gordon's Mill, when he was ten years old, he was kicked by a horse and nearly killed. He did not regain consciousness until the next morning. Often in later life Abe commented upon this event. When his turn came, he said, he hitched his mare to the sweep and started gadding her along. He was just saying, "Get up here," when he was kicked in the face; so he did not finish his sentence. As he was regaining consciousness next morning, however, he finished it: "You old hussy!"

As he grew up and the community developed, Abe took up wider activities. In 1825, when sixteen years old and nearly full-grown, he hired out to a man by the name of James Taylor as a ferryman on the Ohio. His main duty seems to have been to run the ferry-boat along the Indiana side across Anderson Creek where it joins the Ohio not far from Troy. He also helped Taylor with the farm, and for his work as farmer and ferryman he received six dollars a month and board. During this time he became ambitious to do a little business for himself and built his own scow, with which he occasionally carried passengers to midstream so they could board passing steamers. This led him into his first experience with the law. He was brought before Samuel Pate, a Kentucky justice of the peace, on complaint of the Dill brothers, ferrymen from the other side, who

charged Lincoln with running a ferry without a license. Kentucky jurisdiction ran to low water mark on the Indiana shore; and the Dills claimed to have exclusive right under a Kentucky license to ferry across the stream from Kentucky, whereas Lincoln had no right to ferry across from the Indiana side. Abraham pleaded his own case. He said he did not take passengers entirely across the river, but only carried them to midstream in order that they might board the steamers when there was no other way for them to get there. So he had not "set them over the river" and therefore had not violated the Kentucky statute which required a license for such service. Judge Pate sustained Abraham's defense and released him. This experience gave him a keen interest in law and in courts, and he frequently visited this little Kentucky court to hear cases tried and decided.

This experience as ferryman on the Ohio was a liberal education for Abe. The Ohio was an open avenue into the world, of which he had up to that time seen nothing but a small backwoods settlement. The Ohio River might have been called the Main Street of America in those days, leading as it did from the thickly settled East down through the growing settlements of the West, and thence by the Mississippi to the Gulf. Here Abe came into direct contact with strange flotilla of all kinds. He touched all kinds of life, and it added greatly to his knowledge and understanding of men and affairs of the day. He formed many friendships and cultivated his favorite habit of mingling and talking with

his fellow men. Whenever a steamboat stopped at Anderson Creek, he boarded it eagerly and talked with the passengers and crew. There was one phase of this life, however, that he commented upon afterward as being unpleasant. He did not enjoy the rude and profane talk or the boisterous and drunken conduct of the river life of the day.

In 1827, when he was eighteen years old, he worked at common labor for a short time on the Portland Canal, which was being built around the Falls of the Ohio at Louisville. His pay was in silver dollars which he proudly jingled when he got home.

At the age of nineteen he had his first great experience with the big world — in a wonderful trip down the Mississippi River to the cosmopolitan city of New Orleans. James Gentry, the founder and merchant of Gentryville, employed Abraham in 1828 to go with his son, Allen, on a flatboat loaded with produce, down to New Orleans, which was then the principal market for the produce of the Mississippi region as far north as the upper Ohio. Lincoln received eight dollars a month and acted as bow hand with the foremost oar. This was a genuine pilgrimage to the boys. They started from Gentry's landing at old Rockport, and from this point they went by slow flatboat progress down the beautiful Ohio and the mighty Mississippi to New Orleans.

Sometimes they stopped to "linger and trade along the sugar coast." Each night when darkness came they would tie up the boat wherever they found a suitable place. They slept on the boat. One night shortly before reaching New Orleans they had an

adventure which left a permanent scar on Abraham. A company of seven colored cutthroats, armed with clubs and knives, got on the boat while Lincoln and Gentry were asleep, "with intent to kill and rob them." Abe was awakened by the noise they made and got hold of a heavy club or handspike, which he laid about him with such vigor that he knocked several of the negroes into the river and put them all to flight. He received a knife cut which marked him for life. The boys chased their assailants for a short distance and then returned to the boat, "cut cable, weighed anchor, and left."

This remarkable trip gave Lincoln impressions which he never forgot. Here for the first time he saw all the evil effects of slavery. He saw mulattoes and negroes, both men and women, bought and sold at auction in the slave market at New Orleans. He saw slaves punished by their masters. The boys remained in this most interesting Southern port for several weeks, mixing with the people of many different races and nationalities that had come together there. After selling their cargo, they disposed of the flatboat and made the trip home in a big steamboat.

During this journey, also, Abe had an experience which changed his ideas of his opportunities to earn money. He related this incident to Secretary Seward, who afterward reported it from a conversation with President Lincoln in the White House:

"Seward," he said, "did you ever hear how I earned my first dollar?"

"No," said Mr. Seward.

"Well," replied he, "I was about eighteen years of age,

and belonged, as you know, to what they call down South the 'scrubs' — people who do not own land and slaves are nobody there — but we had succeeded in raising, chiefly by my labor, sufficient produce, as I thought, to justify me in taking it down the river to sell. After much persuasion I had got the consent of my mother to go, and had constructed a flatboat large enough to take the few barrels of things we had gathered to New Orleans. A steamer was going down the river. We have, you know, no wharves on the Western streams, and the custom was, if passengers were at any of the landings, they were to go out in a boat, the steamer stopping and taking them on board. I was contemplating my new boat, and wondering whether I could make it stronger or improve it in any part, when two men with trunks came down to the shore in carriages, and looking at the different boats, singled out mine, and asked, 'Who owns this?' I answered modestly, 'I do.' 'Will you,' said one of them, 'take us and our trunks out to the steamer?' 'Certainly,' said I. I was very glad to have the chance of earning something, and supposed that each of them would give me a couple of bits. The trunks were put in my boat, the passengers seated themselves on them, and I sculled them out to the steamer. They got on board, and I lifted the trunks and put them on the deck. The steamer was about to put on steam again, when I called out, 'You have forgotten to pay me.' Each of them took from his pocket a silver half dollar and threw it on the bottom of my boat. I could scarcely believe my eyes as I picked up the money. You may think it was a very little thing, and in these days it seems to me like a trifle, but it was a most important incident in my life. I could scarcely credit that I, the poor boy, had earned a dollar in less than a day; that by honest work I had earned a dollar. I was a more hopeful and thoughtful boy from that time."

Abe's flatboat and river experience was valuable to him later. While practicing law in Illinois he

invented a device to improve the handling of a flatboat and procured a patent on it. During one of the most critical periods of the Civil War, when one of the great problems of the North was to maintain the blockade of Southern ports, a Swedish inventor by the name of John Ericsson brought before the Department of the Navy at Washington a model for a new style of gunboat, which was not approved by the naval experts. It was a singular design, very simple in principle, providing for two heavy guns on a revolving turret mounted on a broad, flat surface, something like the deck of a raft. Although he was turned down by the Navy Department, the persistent Swede made an appeal to the President, and Lincoln was impressed with the design. He said he did not know much about battleships but was an expert on flatboats, and this design seemed to him founded on a flatboat principle. The President arranged for another hearing, which he attended in person. There was still very little favor shown the inventor's plans and a direct appeal was made to the President, who had sat quietly by during Ericsson's demonstration. Abe responded that he thought there was "something in" the plan; so the boat was made as an experiment.

The result was that when the *Merrimac*, the new and terrible Southern gunboat, an "iron-clad monster," steamed up Hampton Roads, threatening Washington at a most critical early period of the war, it was suddenly met by a queer-looking craft that looked like a "cheese box on a raft" — the *Monitor*. The historic battle between the *Monitor* and the *Merrimac*, on March 9, 1862, almost revolu-

tionized naval warfare; and it was all the result of Abe's approval of Ericsson's flatboat invention.

A part of the time while Abe was acting as ferryman for Taylor, he also helped on the farm, particularly at hog-killing time, and did a great deal of butchering in the neighborhood, for which he received thirty-one cents a day — six cents more than the ordinary farm wage. Abe was a rare hand as a country butcher. With his long arms and strong hands he could hold any obstreperous porker, no matter how stubbornly it objected. From this experience he acquired an expression which he often used in later life. On one occasion when he was visited in the White House by a dignified group that came to sympathize with the President because of the awful burden which the war cast upon him, Abe startled them by remarking in an absent, off-hand fashion, "Yes, it's sure a hard hog to hold."

Much new and favorable light has been thrown in recent years upon the associates of Abraham Lincoln during his boyhood and youth in early Hoosierdom. Although much of that community in Spencer County seems backward even today, it was really a progressive pioneer community according to the standards of that early day. It was rapidly settled while the Lincolns were there, first by Kentuckians and later by varied groups of people who really represented the very best element of America. Among them were many people of education and culture, and there were choice libraries in some of those homes.

Abe's active acquaintance covered a radius of perhaps fifty miles around his home. This included

the settlement of New Harmony, which was founded in 1814 by the Rappites and purchased from them in 1825 by Robert Owen, an Englishman on whose ideas of social, industrial, and educational problems the new community was organized. It is difficult to learn just what connection Lincoln had with New Harmony, but it is certain that he knew about this extraordinary experiment and it could not have failed to have some influence upon him. Dennis Hanks said after Lincoln's death that the coming of Owen with his boatload of knowledge when Abe was seventeen "druv him well nigh crazy." New Harmony was about fifty miles from Gentryville. We do not know that Lincoln was ever there, but he knew about it and felt its influence. Many of Robert Owen's ideals became those of Abraham Lincoln.

The year after the Lincolns came to Indiana a remarkable community known as the British settlement was established at Saundersville, forty miles from the Lincoln home. Within two years it grew into a settlement of some fifty-three English, Irish, and Scotch families, representing considerable wealth and culture. The Blue Grass Settlement, which was established later about thirty miles west of the Lincoln home, also contained homes of unusual refinement in which much of the best English poetry and prose were to be found.

Whenever possible, Abe visited law offices at Boonville, Rockport, and Princeton. He heard many leading cases tried by brilliant lawyers in these courts, frequently walking fifteen miles or more through the woods and back the same day to hear a

case. He made the close acquaintance of John C. Breckenridge, a noted lawyer at Boonville, and he became an intimate friend of Judge John Pitcher at Rockport. There is no doubt that Judge Pitcher loaned him books and gave him much helpful advice and assistance. He is quoted as having said to Judge Pitcher, "The things I want to know are in books; my best friend is the man who'll git me a book I ain't read."

The habit of story telling, which stands out as one of Lincoln's great characteristics, was firmly established during his growth in Indiana. His best examples of story tellers in his early youth were his father, Thomas Lincoln, and his friend John Baldwin, the blacksmith. The anecdotes that he loved all his life and told so well were of the wholesome though somewhat crude variety to which he became accustomed in his pioneer surroundings. The use which he made of humorous anecdotes to please his hearers and to carry his point is a fine illustration of his understanding of the human mind, particularly the common mind.

Chauncey Depew was all his life fond of relating an incident of his first visit, as a young newspaper man, at the White House during Lincoln's presidency. Abe stopped the reception line long enough to tell him a story, and then remarked: "There are some who say that I tell too many stories. They think it is unbecoming to the dignity of the presidential office. But I find that plain people, *plain people* — take them as we find them — are more easily influenced by a broadly humorous story than

by any other way, and what the supercilious few may say, I don't care."

His habit of making plain and interesting speeches which everybody could understand was fixed during his life in southern Indiana. One illustration of this characteristic is well remembered in the vicinity. Two neighboring families had a falling out over an old gray goose which had gone astray. After disputing over it for some time, so much heat developed that most of the neighborhood became involved. In order to prevent serious trouble and a possible feud the matter was taken to court. The parties and the witnesses, who included most of the people of the neighborhood, met at the schoolhouse for the trial. Lawyers and a justice were coming from Boonville. Abe was then about seventeen years old, and though he was not a witness, he attended the trial out of boyish curiosity. The lawyers were late in arriving. The opposing parties were seated on opposite sides of the room, and a silent atmosphere of hostility began to be felt, which foreboded trouble. Suddenly the tall, awkward boy arose and began talking. Everybody listened. He told stories until the general tone of the situation was improved. Then he began to make humorous comments bearing directly upon the case. He told them that even if they settled the case by law the cost would be very much more than the goose was worth and that after the lawsuit there would probably be no better feelings than before. He appealed to them to settle the matter as friendly neighbors rather than as enemies. The result of his appeal was that before the lawyers arrived the parties were shaking hands.

Lincoln made here almost the identical appeal that is found in his immortal First Inaugural Address, in which he appealed to the North and the South to settle their differences amicably:

> Can aliens make treaties easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when after much loss on both sides and no gain on either you cease fighting, the identical old questions as to terms of intercourse are again upon you.

Some of the mannerisms and customs of pioneer Hoosierdom remained with Abe all his life. Hoosierisms always lived in his speech. When, on February 27, 1860, he arose to address the giant meeting at Cooper Union Institute after an introduction by William Cullen Bryant, he addressed the presiding officer by the Hoosier title, "Mr. Cheerman." He never adopted habits of profanity, although these were only too common in that pioneer surrounding; but certain quaint idioms remained with him always. "I jings" became a common expression of the White House when Lincoln was President.

Abe Lincoln was a Hoosier. The origin of that now well-known term has never been fully agreed upon; but its original meaning and application are well known. It came into being while Lincoln lived in Indiana, and it came to be applied to the people of Indiana. Whatever its derivation, it signified at that time a rough and husky fellow, such as those Indiana backwoodsmen were — such as Abe certainly was. The very year the Lincolns left Indiana this

popular term became classic through the poem, "The Hoosier's Nest," by John Finley, which was given to the world on New Year's Day, 1830.

> I'm told, in riding somewhere West,
> A stranger found a Hoosier's nest —
> . . . . . .
> Two rifles placed above the door;
> Three dogs lay stretched upon the floor —
> In short, the domicile was rife
> With specimens of Hoosier life.

Lincoln was brought up in such a Hoosier's nest. He looked back always upon his Hoosier boyhood as a happy and joyous period. Although he sometimes commented upon the privations common to those pioneer days as pretty "pinching" times, yet he never considered such life a hardship. It was simply pioneer life, such as suited that day and condition. He fitted into it perfectly and liked it. He often remarked while President, "I tell my Tad that when we are through we will go back to the farm where I was happier digging potatoes at twenty-five cents a day than I am here."

CHAPTER FOUR

HOOSIER SCHOOL DAYS

Before his eighth year Abe, with his sister, had attended school for a short time in Kentucky. He probably learned his letters, but it is reasonably certain that he did not learn to read or write there. There were not enough families to support a school in the little Pigeon Creek settlement in Indiana until over two years after the Lincolns came. The first school Abe attended in Indiana was started during the winter of 1818–1819, when Abe was ten, by Andrew Crawford. The school was in a log hut about two miles from the Lincoln home. The teacher was paid in skins or farm produce provided by subscription.

Very little is known about the educational qualifications of Mr. Crawford other than that he was probably proficient in the three R's and in the use of the birch rod. He seems to have been a man of some importance, however. He had been a justice of the peace, and he cherished a lofty notion of the importance of dignified manners. In addition to regular courses in reading, writing, and arithmetic, he gave an extra course in good manners. He tried to "learn" his "scholars" some of the best usages of polite society — how to make and receive introductions, how a gentleman should salute a lady, how the lady should bow and curtsy. It was noted that from this time Abe always removed his coonskin cap in the presence of ladies.

This school was a "blab school," as were all the

country schools of that day; the children studied out loud. Probably here Abe developed the habit, which he kept throughout his life, of reading aloud anything that he wanted to study.

The school was a very poorly constructed log pole cabin. The floor and the seats were of puncheons, and the only light that came in was through greased paper which covered a vacancy where a log was left out of the side of the building. The school supplies were as crude as the schoolhouse. There were few books and no slates. The school did not furnish maps, globes, charts, or blackboards. The "scholars" learned to write with pens made of buzzard, goose, or turkey quills, and used ink that was made from roots or the juice of berries, usually poke berries. Each pupil made or kept his own copybook and sum book for "cipherin'." A sum book used by Abe in one of these schools was found after his death. He had made it himself out of paper sheets about nine by twelve inches in size. The leaves were sewed together with twine.

There is some slight dispute as to just how many different teachers Abe had in his Indiana school days, and some difference of opinion as to the order in which he was taught by them. In his autobiography he summed up his Hoosier school days very briefly as follows:

> While here Abraham went to A B C schools by littles, kept successively by Andrew Crawford, —— Sweeney, and Azel W. Dorsey. He does not remember any other. Abraham now thinks that the aggregate of his schooling did not amount to one year.

Crawford's school did not last beyond one term. Adequate pay was not forthcoming, and the pupils had to stay at home and work. Abe's second term was four years later, when he was fourteen years of age. This was at the school conducted by Schoolmaster Sweeney, something over four miles from the Lincoln home. It was similar to the Crawford school, except that no course was given in good manners. Mr. Sweeney encouraged young Abraham in his love of reading, and it is believed that about this time Abe began his fixed habit of constant reading whenever he could get a book. He was doing some reading from the time he attended Crawford's school; but it seems that he had little access to books until after this second term of school.

The principal books used in the school were the Bible, Webster's or Dillworth's spelling book, Pike's Arithmetic, and a songbook. Great emphasis was laid upon good penmanship. It was in this school that Abraham perfected his distinctive style of writing, for which he became famed as a good penman. He was called upon to do a great deal of writing and copying for people in the neighborhood.

Abe was at this time fourteen years of age and had reached his full height of six feet and four inches. The men and women of later years, who as children had been his schoolmates, often recalled his singular appearance — coonskin cap, loose blouse, and buckskin breeches which were never long enough to cover his lengthy shanks, leaving naked some six inches or more of shin bone between his low moccasins and his short trousers.

Abe's last schooling was a very short term in 1826, taught by Azel Dorsey. He was then seventeen years of age and was already fairly well read for his time. He probably knew almost as much about books as his teacher and had little to gain from the teaching, although he was undoubtedly benefited by the programs and exercises of the school. Mr. Dorsey had held county office and was a man of affairs. He tried to imbue his pupils with a profound sense of their civic duties to community and state.

It was common in schools then to conduct frequent exhibitions. Often on Friday afternoons and always on special days, particularly the last day of school, the children spoke pieces, gave dialogues, and held debates for their own improvement and for the entertainment of parents and other visitors. Abe took great delight in all this. Here he got his first training in public speaking. Here also he began writing essays and practicing the delivery of great speeches which he committed to memory. Spelling bees were frequent, and Abe was a famous speller. He usually spelled down the school; and when they chose sides for a contest, Abe's side nearly always won. It was in these Hoosier schools that Abraham Lincoln became a good writer, a good speller, and a good "arithmeticker," for he was found to be quick and accurate in "figurin'." Above all, he became a tireless reader and a ready speaker.

Numerous anecdotes have come down to us about Abe's conduct in these schools. Mrs. Anna Gentry, formerly Anna Roby, who was later well known as an interesting and cultivated woman, often told the story

of an incident that happened in the spelling class when she and Abe were classmates. They were "spelling down." The word "defied" had been given and someone had missed it. It came Ann's turn to spell. She started out boldly, "D–e–f—," and then hesitated, not knowing whether the next letter was *y* or *i*. Happening to look at Abe, she saw him, with a grin of boyish gallantry, place his finger at the corner of his eye, giving her the correct suggestion.

Another instance of Abe's early conduct is even more significant. The master had a beautiful pair of antlers, trophies of his hunting prowess, which he suspended above the door of the schoolhouse. With his long reach, Abe took hold of those antlers in the absence of the teacher and started to swing on them. His weight was too great, and one of the prongs broke. As soon as the master came in, Abe told him about it. He said: "I did it, sir. I did not mean to do it, but I swung on it and it broke. I wouldn't have done it if I had thought it would have broken."

It is quite insufficient to pass over Abe's brief and scattered Hoosier school days with an impression of only their limitations. Inadequate as they were in almost every way, they were really of vast and far-reaching importance to him. Since all his schooling had to be gained in three brief terms at widely separated intervals — "by littles," as he said — it is doubtful if such a limited opportunity could have been offered to better advantage than in the way it came to him. He used the years between these terms, which came at the ages of ten, fourteen, and seventeen, in valuable reading and study. Without

these school terms it is difficult to see how Abraham Lincoln would ever have procured what really became a liberal education.

Of course Lincoln's fullest education came through his reading. This has always been emphasized, and never too much. It was the reading of Abraham Lincoln that filled his mind and directed his vision. His first three books were the Bible, Æsop's Fables, and *Robinson Crusoe*. This little library was supplemented some time later by three more: Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, and Weems's *Life of Washington*. Of these six books we are certain. A few others have been named which possibly deserve to be included in this list, such as *Sindbad the Sailor* and *Swiss Family Robinson*, although it is not so certain whether Lincoln actually possessed these.

He read and re-read these simple classics until their very style was ingrained within him. The substance of these books went into his very habits of thought, and their language formed his methods of expression. Their influence can be traced throughout his life, not only in his wonderful simplicity of style but in his tendency of thought and speech. Foremost in influence was the Bible. He read it much as a boy, and he seems to have read it even more as a man. The pure simplicity of the Scriptures appears in the form of all his great utterances. Many of his best thoughts were fashioned directly from the Bible, and he drew many illustrations from this source. He was fond of quoting Scripture all his life, and this habit grew upon him.

It is clear that his habit of story telling was influenced by his reading of Æsop's fables. The stories of Lincoln nearly always contained a moral. Behind them was a philosophical background like that which made these fables of the Greek slave classics. Lincoln's wisdom and the humor of his expressions were in spirit akin to those of Æsop.

When Lincoln was about eighteen years old, a new settler, Josiah Crawford, came into the neighborhood. From him Abe borrowed a life of Washington — whether it was Ramsay's or Weems's is not certain, although it was probably Ramsay's, as evidence seems to show that he had Weems's when he was younger. After reading this book late into the night, until his candle burned out, Abe placed it in a chink in the wall near his bedside. A rain during the night soaked the covers and damaged the book. He took it to the owner and asked what he could do to pay the damage. Crawford allowed him to pull fodder for three days, then the book was his. Lincoln's gratitude for the book was so great, however, that in addition to fulfilling the terms of this bargain, he made, with the help of his father, a walnut cupboard for the Crawfords. This cupboard is still in the possession of the Crawford family.

Weems's *Life of Washington* had an influence on the life of Abraham Lincoln of far-reaching significance. In it he read and re-read the stirring stories of those Revolutionary times. Washington became his ideal. The book implanted within him an ambition to be great. He wanted to be like Washington. On his journey to Washington to take the President's

office, he made a speech before the legislature of New Jersey at Trenton, in which he said:

May I be pardoned, if, upon this occasion, I mention that away back in my childhood, the earliest days of my being able to read, I got hold of a small book, . . . Weems's *Life of Washington*. I remember all the accounts there

Cupboard made by Abraham Lincoln and presented by him to Josiah Crawford in part payment for a book — a life of Washington — that he had borrowed and accidentally damaged. The cupboard was purchased by Henry Ford in 1930, from a great-granddaughter of Josiah Crawford, for the Dearborn Lincoln Museum.

given of the battlefields and struggles for the liberties of the country, and none fixed themselves upon my imagination so deeply as the struggle here at Trenton. The crossing of the river — the contest with the Hessians — the great hardships endured at that time — all fixed themselves on my memory . . .; and you all know, for you have all been boys, how those early impressions last longer than any others. I recollect thinking then, boy even though I was, that there must have been something more than common that those men struggled for.

His regard for Washington as the great and heroic character Weems depicted continued throughout life. He said in one of his notable speeches:

Washington's is the mightiest name on earth, long since mightiest in the cause of civil liberty — still mightiest in the moral reformation. On that name no eulogy is expected. It cannot be. To add brightness to the sun or glory to the name of Washington is alike impossible. Let no one attempt it. In solemn awe pronounce his name and in its naked, deathless splendor leave it shining on.

It is impossible to name all the books that Lincoln read in this early day, but fortunately a great many of them are known. Through the careful research of the members of the Southwestern Indiana Historical Society, the following list has been prepared and published in Vannest's *Lincoln, the Hoosier:*

School Books

Webster's "old blue back" speller
Dillworth's *A New Guide to the English Tongue*
Murray's *English Reader*
Pike's Arithmetic
Barclay's Dictionary
The Kentucky Preceptor

OUTSIDE SCHOOL

The Bible
Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*
Æsop's Fables
Arabian Nights
Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*
Weems's *Life of Washington*
Weems's *Life of Marion*
Ramsay's *Life of Washington*
A history of the United States
Speeches of Henry Clay
Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin
Cooper's *Leather Stocking Tales*
Riley's *Narrative of the Loss of the Brig Commerce*
Revised Statutes of Indiana
Burns's poems
Sindbad the Sailor
Scott's *Lessons in Elocution*
Shakespeare's poems
Law books

He must have read many others. He was quoted as saying in after life that he had read every book within a radius of fifty miles of his home. He had a burning thirst for knowledge, and he read and studied at every opportunity. During those boyhood days he read during the noon hour and at brief periods of rest; in fact, he read so much that at times his associates and especially his father felt that he was shirking his duties. A pioneer home and pioneer surroundings could hardly be considered conducive to continuous reading. The fact that light was very poor at night in the log cabin has caused some biographers to discredit the early stories of his midnight study. It is nevertheless certain that he did read as much as he could in the light of the open fireplace,

especially when he could find dry brush to brighten the flame; and he did read all he could in the wavering light of grease and tallow candles.

Too much emphasis could hardly be given to the nature of the books which he read so earnestly and repeatedly. Most of them were classics, pure and simple, and they expressed the most wholesome aspects and interests of life. The school books were decidedly of that nature. Lincoln said in after years that Murray's *English Reader* "was the most useful book that could be put in the hands of a child at school." All these books contained moral precepts most likely to influence young lives in the right direction. Even the "old blue back" speller abounded in wholesome morals and mottoes. Young Abe was constantly exhorted from the printed pages over which he pored to a life of industry, honesty, sobriety, and truthfulness.

He practiced writing out and committing to memory extracts from his reading. Abe had a very good memory; he could learn quickly, and what he learned he never forgot. It has been said that his mind was "wax to receive and marble to retain."

As he became older, he practiced making speeches and writing essays. After hearing a speech or a sermon that impressed him, he could reproduce it almost word for word. He was particularly adept in mimicking the circuit-riding preachers whom he often heard in that community. This sport must have provided good vocal exercise for a young orator; for a preacher of that day "who was half a preacher could be heard at least a mile."

He read with the keenest interest every newspaper that he could get hold of. He was ever alert to the progress of current events. At the store in Gentryville he had access to the *Louisville Journal* and the *Vincennes Sun*. He probably also read the *New Harmony Gazette* and the *Terre Haute Register*. He borrowed from "Uncle Wood," a neighbor, and read an Ohio temperance paper.

An essay which Abraham wrote on temperance was printed in this paper. He wrote at that time two other essays that were notable — one on national politics and one on cruelty to animals. The essay on national politics was read by Judge Pitcher, who said, "The world can't beat it." He is also known to have written a lengthy essay on the horrors of war. He was greatly helped in this practice by the *Kentucky Preceptor*, which cited some splendid examples for him to study — all of them of patriotic and religious bearing.

In 1825 while working for David Turnham, a constable who lived at Gentryville, Abe got hold of a copy of the *Revised Statutes of Indiana* of 1824. It contained the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution of the United States, the Constitution of the State of Indiana, the Ordinance of 1787, and a number of state statutes and rules governing the procedure and practice of law, together with an outline of the organization of different units of our government. Here began Abe's study of the Declaration of Independence, which next to the Bible was his chief inspiration all through life. Standing in Independence Hall in Philadelphia, February 22,

1861, he said: "I have never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence."

He also practiced writing poetry. Some of his boyhood rhymes came to light in later years in a sum book which he had used in school. He probably adapted, rather than created, most of these lines:

Good boys who to their books apply
Will all be great men by and by.

Abraham Lincoln — his hand and pen.
He will be good, but God knows when.

Time! What an empty vapor 'tis!
And days, how swift they are,
Swift as an Indian arrow,
Fly on like a shooting star.
The present moment just is here,
Then slides away in haste,
That we can never say they're ours,
But only say are past.

There is something particularly touching and very Lincoln-like in the lines which he probably wrote for the epitaph of Johnny Kongapod, a Kickapoo Indian who died in that region in Lincoln's boyhood:

Here lies poor Johnny Kongapod;
Have mercy on him, gracious God,
As he would do if he was God,
And You were Johnny Kongapod.

He continued these poetic diversions far into his later life. His best-known effort in this line was written upon the only visit that he made to his old Indiana home, fifteen years after he left it. This is

best explained in a letter that he wrote to a friend on April 18, 1846, enclosing the poem:

In the fall of 1844, thinking I might aid some to carry the state of Indiana for Mr. Clay, I went into the neighborhood in that state in which I was raised, where my mother and only sister were buried, and from which I had been absent about fifteen years. That part of the country is, within itself, as unpoetical as any spot on earth; but still, seeing it and its objects and inhabitants aroused feelings in me which were certainly poetry; though whether my expression of those feelings is poetry is quite another question.

The poem follows:

My childhood's home I see again,
And sadden with the view;
And still, as memory crowds my brain,
There's pleasure in it too.

O Memory! Thou midway world
'Twixt earth and paradise,
Where things decayed and loved ones lost
In dreamy shadows rise;

And, freed from all that's earthly vile,
Seem hallowed, pure, and bright,
Like scenes in some enchanted isle,
All bathed in liquid light.

As dusky mountains please the eye
When twilight chases day;
As bugle notes that, passing by,
In distance die away;

As leaving some grand waterfall,
We, lingering, list its roar,
So memory will hallow all
We've known, but know no more.

Near twenty years have passed away
Since here I bade farewell
To woods and fields, and scenes of play,
And playmates loved so well.

Where many were, but few remain
Of old familiar things;
But seeing them, to mind again
The lost and absent brings.

The friends I left that parting day,
How changed, as time has sped!
Young childhood grown, strong manhood gray,
And half of all are dead.

I hear the loved survivors tell
How nought from death could save,
Till every sound appears a knell,
And every spot a grave.

I range the fields with pensive tread,
And pace the hollow rooms,
And feel (companion of the dead)
I'm living in the tombs.

Considering his great lack of schooling, the educated world marvels at the pure and forceful English which is to be found in the writings of Abraham Lincoln. One of his letters is hanging in the halls of classic Oxford as an example of perfect English. In answer to a question as to how he got his power of "putting things" so perfectly, he explained:

I can say this, that among my earliest recollections I remember how, when a mere child, I used to get irritated when anybody talked to me in a way I could not understand. I don't think I ever got angry at anything else in

my life. But that always disturbed my temper, and has ever since. I can remember going to my little bedroom after hearing the neighbors talk of an evening with my father, and spending no small part of the night walking up and down, trying to make out what was the exact meaning of some of their, to me, dark sayings. I could not sleep, though I often tried to, when I got on such a hunt after an idea, until I had caught it; and when I thought I had got it, I was not satisfied until I had repeated it over and over, until I had put it in language plain enough, as I thought, for any boy I knew to comprehend. This was a kind of passion with me, and it has stuck by me; for I am never easy now when I am handling a thought, till I have bounded it north, and bounded it south, and bounded it east, and bounded it west. Perhaps that accounts for the characteristic you observe in my speeches, though I never put the two things together before.

Abraham Lincoln went out of Indiana a full-grown man at the age of twenty-one, with his mental habits fully formed. Through his rich and intensive reading his mind had become a storehouse of knowledge. In his Hoosier school days Abe had done much to prepare himself for an active and useful life in the great world he was about to enter.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE PIONEER HOME

The log cabin will always be associated with Abraham Lincoln. Three such cabins stand out in the picture of his childhood and youth. He was born and lived for two years in the log cabin which now stands at Hodgenville; he lived five years in the log cabin on the Knob Creek farm in Kentucky, and fourteen years in the log cabin home in Spencer County, Indiana. Those were log cabin days and it was a log cabin state of civilization in which he grew up. He lived in these rude homes with his family; he fitted into this pioneer environment naturally and entered into the life whole-heartedly.

An unusually intimate picture of this pioneer home life was given, after Lincoln became President, by an old man named Wesley Hall, who had been a boyhood friend of Lincoln's, living near the old Spencer County home in Indiana. He told the following story, which has been preserved by the Reverend J. Edward Murr and published in Volume XIII of the *Indiana Magazine of History*.

The Halls had to pass the Lincoln home going to and from the mill. One day Wesley had been kept late at the mill, and was going home with the grist on a cold, dark, winter evening. It was snowing furiously; so when he came to the Lincoln cabin, he decided to stop for the night. He made his "Hel-lo" out in front in the usual backwoods fashion. The rest of the story follows:

By and by I heard the door begin to creak on its wooden hinges, and then through the storm I saw old Tom a shadin' his eyes with his hand a tryin' to see who I wuz. And purty soon, satisfying himself that it wuz me, he leaned back and laughed a big, broad laugh, and then a startin' out to where I wuz, he says, says he: "Is that you, Wesley? You git down from thar and come in out of the weather." So I commenced to git ready to slide off my sack and by the time I got ready to light, old Tom wuz there and helped me down. Then a turnin' around lookin' toward the cabin, he calls out a time or two, big and loud: "Abe! O, Abe! Abe!" And he ain't more'n called till I seen Abe a comin' through the door, and when he asked what wuz wanted, and seein' who I wuz at the same time, old Tom says: "Come out here and git Wesley's grist while I put his hoss in the stable. Wesley's mighty nigh froze, I reckon."

Then he laughed again. Well, I wuz cold, I c'n tell you, fer I hadn't had anything to eat ceptin' parched corn since morning. Well, as I say, old Tom told Abe to come and get my sack, and I noticed as Abe come out to where I wuz he hadn't but one shoe on, and thinks I to myself, what's up with Abe? Fer I saw Abe wuz a walkin' on the ball of his heel so's to hold his big toe up which wuz all tied up, and by this time I reckon there wuz mighty nigh six inches of snow on the ground. Yit Abe's foot was so big and long it didn't make no difference if the snow wuz that deep. Abe hadn't any trouble about a keepin' his sore toe above the snow line. When I asked him what wuz the matter with his foot he told me he'd split his big toe with an ax out in the clearin' that day. Well, Abe then wuz as big and stout as he ever wuz, and so he jest reached over and took that sack of meal with one hand and layin' it across his arm, he and me went into the house while old Tom put the hoss in the pole stable.

I set down in front of the fireplace and commenced to thaw out, and in a little bit old Tom come in, and a settin' down by me a slappin' his hands together and then a

rubbin' em so, like he allus' done, he says, says he: "Wesley, you got purty cold I reckon, did you?" And when I commenced to say I did, Mrs. Lincoln come in and she says, after we'd passed the time of day, she says, says she: "Wesley, I reckon' you're hungry." And I told her I wuz; and then I told her about the parched corn. And she says: "We hain't got no meal to bake bread. We're out just now," but a pointin' to the big bank of embers that I'd already noticed in the fireplace, and of course know'd what it meant, she says, says she, "We've got some potatoes in thar a bakin' and we'll git a bite fer you purty soon." At that I spoke up and I says, says I: "Mrs. Lincoln, jist help yerself out of my sack thar." And so she done as I told her.

Well, old Tom and Abe and me went on a talkin' and purty soon I heard a funny grindin' noise back of me, and I looked around to see what it wuz, and it wuz Mrs. Lincoln a hollerin' out a big turnip.

She was makin' a grease lamp. Course I'd seen many a one. She hollered it out and cut a small groove in it on the lip, and after she'd filled it with hog's lard and laid a wick in the notch, and lit it, she handed it to me, and a butcher knife to Abe, and she says: "Boys, go and get me some bacon." So me and Abe went out to a little pole smoke house and I held up the light while Abe cut a half moon out of a side of bacon. So Mrs. Lincoln went on with gittin' supper, and by and by she says: "Supper's ready." So when we set down to it we had corn cakes, baked potatoes, and fried bacon. After the supper dishes was washed up, old Tom, a slappin' his hands together and a rubbin' em like I say, he says, says he: "Now, Abe, bring out your book and read fer us." Old Tom couldn't read himself, but he wuz proud that Abe could, and many a time he'd brag about how smart Abe wuz to the folks around about. Well, Abe reached up on a shelf where he kept his books and then a stirrin' up the fire on the hearth with some dry stuff he had piled in one corner by the jamb, he commenced to read.

The narrator remembered what Abe had read:

> Oh, yes! It wuz the life of Ben Franklin. He read to us till bedtime, and that night Abe and me slept together up in the loft. We got up there through a scuttle hole in one corner of the ceilin', and to git up to it we had to climb up a peg ladder made by borin' holes in the logs and insertin' wooden pins. I remember the bedstid, which of course I saw many a time. It wuz a mighty sorry affair; still, it answered the purpose. A hole wuz bored in the north wall and a rail-like piece wuz sloped off to fit this. The same thing wuz done on the west wall, and these two rails wuz brought together and fastened in the same way to an upright post out in the floor and then acrost these wuz laid split boards or whipped plank, or some thin slats rived out, and on these wuz a gunny sack filled with leaves gathered from the woods. On this Abe and me slept covered with bear skins.

All biographies of Lincoln give paramount importance to the influence of his mother, Nancy Hanks Lincoln. This has been especially emphasized because of the significant statement credited to him in after years: "All that I am and all that I hope to be I owe to my angel mother."

Out of the obscurity which surrounds this evidently remarkable mother, some facts stand forth with clear distinctness. She was twenty-two years of age when she married Thomas Lincoln and twenty-five when Abraham was born. As a young girl she was marked for her beauty and grace and for her vivacity and intelligence. She was tall and slender, delicate rather than strong. There are many traditions which cannot be verified but which may well be believed of her sprightliness and charm as a Kentucky girl in

the social activities of those pioneer days. She seems to have been foremost in funmaking, dancing, singing, and frolicking. There are many witnesses to her fine personal qualities and her splendid character.

But the main impression which has come down in history concerning Nancy Hanks, both as a girl and a mature woman, is that she was unusually gentle and devout. She possessed a deep religious strain which stood out in later life in both her appearance and conduct. We hear of her more often in religious exercises than in any other association. She possessed a lofty spirit and was always looking and hoping for something better than the hard lot of a pioneer woman; but with all this she was uncomplaining. She had some education and undoubtedly possessed great power of mind. Her son said of her: "She was intellectual by nature, had a strong memory, acute judgment, and was cool and heroic." At another time he made this terse comment concerning his mother: "Her form was slender; her face was fair; her character was strong."

It is pretty generally accepted that she helped to teach Abe to read. At any rate it is known positively that she read to him and told him stories of the Bible before he could read. Her religious devotion seems to have left a deeper impression upon him than any other phase of her influence. When President Lincoln was stricken with anguish over the death of his son Willie in the White House, his thoughts turned to his mother and he said: "I remember her prayers and they have always followed me. They have clung to me all my life." She

directed him to the best things of life — to kindness, love, and trust in God. He never forgot her last words: on her deathbed she asked him to be kind always to his father and sister and to trust in God.

During the fall of 1818, less than two years after the Lincolns came to Indiana, the little Pigeon Creek settlement in which they lived was stricken by a terrible plague in the form of a disease called milk sickness. There was no physician within thirty miles and many of the inhabitants, both young and old, were quickly carried away. Among the first to go were Thomas and Betsy Sparrow, uncle and aunt of Nancy Hanks Lincoln, who were then living in the old open-faced cabin which the Lincolns had abandoned for their new log cabin home. Shortly after their death Nancy was herself taken with the dread disease and soon succumbed. She died on October 5, 1818, at the age of thirty-four.

Nothing could be more melancholy than a pioneer funeral. With his own hands Thomas Lincoln made the rude coffin, fashioned of rough-hewn boards and fastened together with wooden pegs which little Abe had whittled. Abe saw his mother buried on the little oak knoll about a quarter of a mile south of the cabin, where it is known the bereaved boy often stood and shed tears of heartfelt grief. It was a sacred shrine for him through life, and is now memorialized as a Lincoln shrine.

There were no services of any kind at the time of the burial, but some weeks later when the Reverend David Elkins, who had preached at the Little Mount Church in Kentucky, was in the neighborhood, he came

and held services over the grave of Nancy Hanks Lincoln. Tradition says that Abraham had provided for these funeral services by writing to Mr. Elkins and asking him to come. It can be believed, because Abe is known to have learned to write about that time in the school conducted by Crawford.

Abraham was nine years of age at the time of his mother's death; he had lived through the most impressionable period of his life under her immediate care and guidance. There is no doubt but that her teaching and example, her love and care, had a profound influence upon his life. He was deeply affected by her suffering and death. It is believed that this sad experience helped to account for the deep melancholy which was peculiar to him throughout life.

After the death of his mother he suffered one more touching bereavement in his Indiana home. His only sister, Sarah, who married Aaron Grigsby on August 2, 1826, died June 30, 1828, and was buried in the little Pigeon Creek Cemetery about a mile from her mother. Abe felt this loss very deeply.

For over a year after the death of Nancy Hanks, Thomas Lincoln tried to maintain a home in the lonely cabin on the knoll with the two children — Sarah aged eleven, and Abe nine.

In the fall of 1819 Thomas Lincoln went to Kentucky. Sarah Bush Johnston, who, it was rumored, had at one time been a sweetheart of Thomas Lincoln, was then a widow. Thomas brushed up his clothes and went to Elizabethtown to court the widow. It seems that some of his neighbors who knew of

his plans wished him luck, but doubted his success. Anyway, he went, and lost no time in explaining his mission. He proposed to Mrs. Johnston that since she was a widow and needed a husband and since he was a widower and needed a wife they take a wedding trip over to Indiana. She frankly responded that she had no objections to marrying him, but that she "couldn't leave right off because she owed some debts that had to be paid." Thomas was equal to the occasion. He asked for her debts. She made out a list of her creditors and the amount owing to each. Thomas paid every one and, returning with the receipts, claimed the widow's hand. They were married on December 2, and went right to the Lincoln home in Spencer County, Indiana.

They arrived with a four-horse wagon load of household goods and supplies. Sarah Bush Johnston, now Mrs. Thomas Lincoln, brought what looked like wealth and comfort to the barren and cheerless home. She had some unusually good furniture for that day — a mahogany bureau that had cost fifty dollars, a feather bed, and good kitchenware. She had three children, a son and two daughters, just about the age of Sarah and Abe. Through her capable and kind management this crowded log cabin home was made a place of harmony and good will. Through her persuasion the easy-going Thomas was induced to finish and improve the cabin. A floor was put in, doors and windows were provided, and a new order of life went into effect.

It is impossible to overemphasize the importance of all this to Abraham at this period of his life.

His new mother understood and appreciated him better than any one except his own mother had ever done; and she loved him as much as she loved her own son. She understood his longings and visions, and she encouraged him in them. She insisted that he should have every opportunity to improve his mind and she did much to overcome the well-meant scruples of his father, who could see that Abe's reading was interfering with his work. All this made Abe feel "like somebody." Dennis Hanks, a distant relative, who was then staying at the Lincoln home, said afterward about the coming of Sarah Bush Lincoln:

> Aunt Sairy sartainly did have faculty. I reckon we was all purty ragged and dirty when she got there. The first thing she did was to tell me to tote one of Tom's carpenter benches to a place outside the door, near the hoss trough. Then she had me an' Abe an' John Johnston, her boy, fill the trough with spring water. She put out a gourd full of soft soap, and another one to dip water, an' told us boys to wash up for dinner. You just naturally had to be somebody when Aunt Sairy was around. She had Tom build her a loom, an' when she heard o' some lime burners bein' round Gentryville, Tom had to mosey over an' get some lime an' whitewash the cabin. An' he made her an' ash hopper fur lye, an' a chicken-house nothin' could get into. . . . Cracky, but Aunt Sally was some punkins!

This homely description may be taken as a fair indication of the quality of this good woman. She possessed great energy and rare good sense. She was a genuine mother to Abe, and her influence upon him was second only to that of Nancy Hanks. There is some doubt in the minds of many biographers as

Chicago Historical Society

Sarah Bush Lincoln. After a daguerreotype.

to which of these wonderful mothers Lincoln referred when he said, "All that I am and all that I hope to be I owe to my angel mother." There is no real need, however, to try to settle this question. The fact is that both of these noble women deserved that tribute. This foster mother was living at the time of President Lincoln's assassination, and she said of him then:

Abe was a good boy, and I can say what scarcely one woman — a mother — can say in a thousand. Abe never gave me a cross word or look, and never refused to do anything I requested him. I never gave him a cross word in all my life. His mind and mine — what little I had —

seemed to run together. He was here after he was elected President. He was the best boy I ever saw, or expect to see.

Thomas Lincoln lived for thirty-three years after the death of Nancy Hanks Lincoln. He died in 1851 at the age of seventy-five. It is strange that so little has been accurately written concerning him. He lived for three quarters of a century, and during all that time his life was an open book; but the things that have been written of him have been strangely twisted.

Recent investigations, however, have traced him by documents of record — deeds, contracts, tax records, court proceedings, church minutes, public vouchers, and business ledgers — that show him as he was. He is emerging from doubtful obscurity to his rightful place as a typical frontiersman and a pioneer husband and father worthy in every respect to be the father of Abraham Lincoln. He was of a mild and unassertive disposition, somewhat disposed to dreaminess and devoted to the spirit of wanderlust. He was lacking in that kind of thrifty grasp that was needful in pioneer times, as it is now, to get ahead in a worldly sense.

During his life he owned five different log cabins, some of which he built with his own hands for housing his family. Each of them was better than the one before. He never lived on any property but his own. He always possessed land and did what he could in rather unprogressive ways to cultivate and improve it. Thrown upon the world at the age of ten by the tragic death of his father, he had to endure

through life a little more than his rightful share of the hardships and privations of pioneer life. He had no education and never could "do more than to bunglingly write his own name." But the name of Thomas Lincoln, written by his unlettered hand, still stands upon public records in Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, and nowhere does it appear in any way to his discredit.

The life of Thomas Lincoln in Kentucky has been brought to light most clearly by the splendid researches of Louis A. Warren, who says in his book, *Lincoln's Childhood and Parentage:*

> The writer, after examining thousands of public records in Kentucky, affirms that there is no document of which he is aware that is detrimental to the reputation of Thomas Lincoln. Hundreds of documents have been read charging others with drunkenness, adultery, engaging in riots, breaking the Lord's day, assault and battery, profane swearing, and so on, but the name of Thomas Lincoln never appears among the accused.
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> . . . . . .
>
> Humility, sobriety, industry, and integrity are some of the traits that characterized the Thomas Lincoln we know in this early period of his life.

Thomas Lincoln had no bad habits — at least, none of a vicious nature — and he was uniformly kind and affectionate. He was liked and respected by his neighbors and in minor ways seems to have been something of a leader in both his Kentucky and Indiana communities. He was a good carpenter when he chose to work at that trade, and was a fair cabinetmaker. There are still to be found some specimens of rude furniture which he fashioned.

He always possessed a good set of tools. He was the boss carpenter at the building of the little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church and later served on its board of trustees. Thomas Lincoln was a skilled hunter, though he hunted only for food.

There is also a misunderstanding of Thomas Lincoln's attitude toward his son Abe. Until very recently the tradition has prevailed that he was grossly unsympathetic toward Abe; that he did not understand or appreciate him; and that he discouraged his habit of reading and his desire to get an education. This tradition is founded upon some evidence, but its conclusions are entirely wrong. We have the written statement of Abraham himself: "My father insisted that none of his children should suffer from want of education as he had."

There is ample proof that, instead of being opposed to Abe's learning to read, he was proud of his ability to read and write, and often asked him to read aloud when company came. He did not approve of Abe's habit of lying in the shade with a book when there was work to be done. It should in justice be noted, however, that Abraham had acquired by these habits a reputation in the community for laziness, which was probably resented by his father. As one of the neighbors expressed it, "Abe was no hand to pitch in to his work like killin' snakes," especially when he had a dream in his mind or a book in his hand. There is no evidence that he deliberately shirked his work, but it is easy enough to understand how his habits of reading and dreaming must have interfered with his work. This is no discredit to Abe; but

neither is it a discredit to his neighbors, and certainly none to his father, that this disposition should not have been very much appreciated in the midst of hard and constant pioneer work. Abe once said that his father "taught him to work but never taught him to love it." It is probably true that Thomas Lincoln could not and did not see the great advantages that would accrue from more than an ordinary education, and so felt that the time Abe spent in reading was largely wasted.

The legendary suspicion that Thomas Lincoln was hard and unsympathetic with young Abraham even to the point of cruelty is entirely untrue. One incident has been established upon which this legend seems to be based. It is well known that Abe was a most inquisitive boy. When strangers came, he plied them with questions until no one else could get in a word. On one occasion, when a covered wagon stopped before the Lincoln house and the driver was asking some information from Thomas Lincoln, Abraham was sitting perched on the rail fence, asking question after question with such insistence that it almost stopped the conversation between his father and the stranger. Thomas asked him to stop, and when Abraham persisted, the exasperated father gave the inquisitive son a sound box on the side of the head, which knocked Abe off the top rail. This is the one outstanding example of the cruelty of Thomas Lincoln. Tradition says, however, that Abe got up, neither hurt nor crestfallen, and continued his questions at a safer distance.

Many of Abe's outstanding qualities can be traced

directly to inheritance from his father. He inherited his strong physique, his good nature, and his uncomplaining disposition. Both these men were satisfied through life with indifferent clothes and food. Abe never cared what he ate or what he wore, even in the White House. Thomas Lincoln was always fond of telling humorous anecdotes; and this was one of Abe Lincoln's most pronounced characteristics. Thomas Lincoln had a deeply ingrained sense of honesty; Abraham is best known as "Honest Abe."

The fact that the Lincoln home was a Christian home cannot be unduly stressed. The elder Lincolns were undoubtedly pious people and very devout. They were particularly active in the little Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, at least during the last seven years of their stay in Indiana. Thomas Lincoln was received by letter into membership in this church on January 7, 1823. He and his wife, Sarah Bush Lincoln, were active church workers from that time forth. Thomas was a trustee of the church for three years and served on church committees for visiting neighbor churches and for investigating the conduct of other members. He was always a substantial supporter of the church to the limit of his means. It is believed that Abraham Lincoln never sat at a meal in his Indiana home, especially after the coming of his foster mother, at which grace was not invoked, either by his father or mother. The habits which became firmly fixed in Abraham in his Hoosier home were according to the best and purest standards.

Gentleness and kindness were taught in the Lincoln home. Abe could never endure the sight of pain and

suffering and was quick to offer relief. As a boy, he was particularly kind to animals. The boys who grew up in the little Pigeon Creek neighborhood remembered an incident of his kindness of heart in boyhood. Abe was reproducing a Sunday sermon before a group of boys when one of them began torturing a little turtle, or land terrapin, and ended the cruel play by dashing it against a tree with such force as to break the turtle's shell. The sight of the quivering turtle aroused in Abe a spirit of righteous indignation. He launched forth into a pointed sermon of his own on cruelty to animals, in which he made a declaration at white heat that was long remembered. "An ant's life," he said, "is as sweet to it as our lives are to us."

The Lincolns left their Indiana home in March, 1830, when Abe was twenty-one years of age. Thomas Lincoln sold his humble possessions in Spencer County and moved to Illinois, where he thought the prospects were much better. He was discouraged mainly because of the milk sickness which had been a constant menace in the little Pigeon Creek settlement, taking the lives of both men and animals.

It had become apparent that the land upon which Thomas Lincoln had settled in southern Indiana was not profitable farming land. It did not look as well when cleared as it did an unbroken forest.

The Lincolns put all their possessions into two wagons drawn by ox teams, and started for Illinois. Abe drove one of the teams. They went by way of Vincennes; and here they crossed the Wabash at an old ferry near the site of Fort Sackville, where

George Rogers Clark had gained his great victory in the conquest of the Old Northwest. Abraham spent some time in this historic old town, visiting with much interest the famous Harrison House and other points of interest. He saw here for the first time a printing plant, that of the *Western Sun*.

Lincoln's life in his father's home practically ended when they left Indiana. He was then of full age and ready to launch out into the world for himself. He seldom saw his people afterward. His life was entirely separate and apart from theirs. It was a life in which they could not enter; but he kept in touch with them as long as he lived.

Thomas Lincoln's lack of thrift was sadly evident in his later years, and it was frequently necessary for his son to help him in small ways. When Thomas was in his last sickness in 1851, Abraham wrote his stepbrother, John Johnston:

> I desire that neither Father nor Mother shall be in want of any comfort, either in health or sickness, while they live; and I feel sure you have not failed to use my name, if necessary, to procure a doctor or anything else for Father in his present sickness.
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> . . . . . .
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> I sincerely hope Father may recover his health; but if not, let him put his trust in God. At all events, tell him to remember to call upon and confide in our great and good and merciful Maker, who will not turn away from him in any extremity. He notes the fall of a sparrow and numbers the hairs of our heads, and He will not forget the dying man who puts his trust in Him.
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> . . . . . .
>
> If it be his lot to go now, he will soon have a joyous meeting with many loved ones gone before, and where

the rest of us, through the help of God, hope ere long to join them.

After the death of Thomas Lincoln, Abraham continued his interest in the welfare of his foster mother, Sarah Bush Lincoln.

Many years after the Lincolns left their Indiana home some of their friends and neighbors planted a tree near the site of the Lincoln cabin in Lincoln City as a memorial to Abraham Lincoln. It is not known just when this tree was planted, but it was probably about the time he first came into national fame. It was a very fitting place for the first memorial to the man to whom all the world has since been erecting great and lasting monuments.

Indiana claims Lincoln as a Hoosier; for he came into that state a child of seven and lived there until he was a man of twenty-one. A few weeks before his death Lincoln said to an Indiana regiment: "I was born in Kentucky, raised in Indiana, and reside in Illinois." Indiana justly and with pride claims the "raising."

CHAPTER SIX

IN YOUNG ILLINOIS

When the Lincolns came to Illinois, this was a typical pioneer state of the Revolutionary West, bringing America to the Mississippi. It was a prairie state, joining the timber regions with the grassy plains. Illinois, the third state to be carved out of the Old Northwest, had been admitted to the Union in 1818. It was not so fully settled as Indiana, and it was perhaps more typical of the growing and expanding western settlement of America than the place of Abraham's Hoosier boyhood.

Abraham was just twenty-one years of age when he arrived in Illinois. A brief account of this last Lincoln migration is set forth in Abraham's autobiography. Briefly and in terse language he says:

> March 1, 1830, Abraham having just completed his twenty-first year, his father and family, with the families of the two daughters and sons-in-law of his stepmother, left the old homestead in Indiana and came to Illinois.
>
> Their mode of conveyance was wagons drawn by ox teams, and Abraham drove one of the teams. They reached the county of Macon, and stopped there some time within the same month of March.
>
> His father and family settled a new place on the north side of the Sangamon River, at the junction of the timberland and prairie, about ten miles westerly from Decatur. Here they built a log cabin, into which they removed, and made sufficient of rails to fence ten acres of ground, fenced and broke the ground, and raised a crop of sown corn upon it the same year.

The route by which the Lincolns came was mostly unmarked. It consisted of poorly made dirt roads

over the cold and cheerless prairie north and west through Illinois from the crossing of the Wabash at Vincennes, Indiana. Lincoln afterward said he thought their route was about the same as that along which the main line of the Illinois Central Railroad was built. Twenty-six years later he pointed out the exact spot, "or at least within six feet of it," as he said, where he stopped his ox team in Decatur at the public square by the old courthouse in which he was afterward to try many cases. This old log courthouse has since been removed and preserved in a park on the edge of the city. The site where the Lincoln wagon stopped is now marked by a bronze tablet.

Abraham stayed with his father long enough to help build the log cabin, clear some ground, and get the family settled. The rails which he helped split to fence in the ten-acre patch afterward became famous. He wrote in his autobiography concerning those rails:

> These are, or are supposed to be, the rails about which so much is being said just now, though these are far from being the first or only rails ever made by Abraham.

Some of these rails were exhibited on behalf of the rail-splitter candidate at the national convention in 1860. They helped nominate Abraham Lincoln for President.

This was the last regular work that Abraham ever did for his father. Being past twenty-one years of age, he was ready to start out in life for himself. When he left his home in the summer of 1830, he had nothing. He did not even have a good suit of clothes,

Macon County Courthouse at Decatur, Illinois.

and one of his first jobs was to split rails in order to obtain some. He had to split four hundred rails for every yard of brown jean, dyed with white walnut bark, that would be necessary to make him a pair of trousers. Abe was a good worker, and odd jobs were plentiful. He spent the remainder of the summer and fall working as a hired hand on different farms of that neighborhood, mostly with the ax and maul.

The winter of 1830–1831 was the winter of the celebrated deep snow of Illinois. This prairie snowstorm established a base date line from which those early Illinois pioneers dated principal events — "before and after the deep snow" — for a generation or more. In all that prairie region the snow lay more than four feet deep for many weeks. The temperature went so far below zero and remained down so long that nearly all the wild animals died of cold

and starvation. The pioneers who endured this big snow always afterward called themselves "snowbirds."

During a part of this time Abe was splitting rails for Major Warnick, who was sheriff of Macon County. His feet were frozen so badly at one time that he was laid up for two weeks. He occupied this time in reading and studying a set of the laws of Illinois which Major Warnick had in his home.

Before the winter was over, Abe was employed, together with his stepbrother, John Johnston, and a distant relative, John Hanks, to take a flatboat loaded with provisions from Beardstown to New Orleans for Denton Offutt, a "speculating" business man of Springfield.

As soon as the snow began to go off, the boys started for Springfield. The country was so badly flooded that they could not travel by land; so they bought a canoe and came by the way of the Sangamon River to Springfield, where they were to meet Offutt. After some delay Offutt agreed to have Abe and his companions build the boat for him and to pay them twelve dollars a month each. They went to old Sangamontown on the river, seven miles northwest of Springfield, to carry out their contract. Here they cut the timber out of the woods and spent four weeks building the boat. They boarded themselves in a little shack which they had put up along the river. Abe seems to have been cook as well as boss carpenter. Here he made new friends and acquaintances who visited the shack evenings to hear his droll stories and take part in the rough-and-

ready games with which the boys amused themselves.

The boat was finished and loaded with provisions, and the expedition started up the Sangamon about the middle of April. The heavy flatboat stuck going over the mill dam at old New Salem, a settlement located about fifteen miles northwest of Springfield — not the village by the same name appearing on recent maps about sixty-five miles southwest of Springfield. The heavily loaded back part of the boat sank and began to fill with water. Abe unloaded the cargo, consisting mostly of barrels of pork, and bored a hole in the hull at the bow. Then he tipped the boat forward with the bow suspended over the dam and drained out the water. The augur which Abe used is preserved in the museum at New Salem. The hole was easily plugged; the empty boat was shoved over the dam into the water below; the cargo was reloaded; and the boys were on their way. The whole town had gathered to watch the boys get out of this difficulty.

This was Abe's first introduction to the little town of New Salem. The villagers who watched him handle the flatboat episode formed the opinion from the start that this big fellow knew his business. Many years afterward Abe invented a device, upon which a patent was granted, for helping get flatboats over shoals.

This was Abe's second trip to the great Southern port of New Orleans. It strengthened and extended his impressions received from the first trip there as a

gawky Hoosier boy, three years before. He again saw slavery in its most degrading forms. He spent nearly four weeks looking about the city, getting what knowledge he could from the associations that were so new and strange to him. He had intended to spend several months there, but Johnston and Hanks both became ill; so he returned with them. He helped to fire the boiler on a Mississippi steamer to work his way back.

The business had been handled to Offutt's satisfaction. He took a liking for this tall, clever, good-natured youth, and offered to hire him to help run a new store and a mill which he was establishing in the little town of New Salem. Before beginning this employment, Abe visited his parents and helped them move to a new home at a place called Goose Nest Prairie, in Coles County, near Charleston. The family had suffered much during this first year in Illinois from fever and ague, and they wanted a change of location. This was the last time that Abe saw them for many years.

When Abraham came to New Salem in the late part of the summer of 1831, it was a struggling but ambitious little town located on a narrow ridge which was part of a high bluff overlooking the Sangamon. It was at this time about the size of the city of Chicago, having about twelve houses. New Salem was destined never to have more than about fifteen families; nearly its whole history is linked with the history of the early Illinois days of Abraham Lincoln. When he left New Salem about six years later, the town was dying. Although

it disappeared entirely, leaving the region nothing but a forlorn waste for three fourths of a century, it has been restored to fame again by public-spirited Americans who are faithfully restoring the pioneer buildings that were there at the time of Abraham Lincoln. New Salem has become one of the most impressive of Lincoln shrines. Sangamontown is gone.

The very day that Lincoln arrived, an election was in progress and they needed at the polling place a clerk who could write. Mentor Graham, the schoolmaster, was acting as one of the clerks; and since the man who had been chosen as the other clerk was sick, Graham had to find a substitute. After a glance at the uncouth but intelligent-looking stranger, Graham asked Lincoln if he could read and write. Abraham answered in his droll fashion that he guessed he "could make a few rabbit tracks"; so he was sworn in as clerk, and proved to be a good one. He enlivened the tedium of the election hours as they dragged on throughout the day by witty stories which made him immediately popular. Many of those at the polling place remembered him as the ingenious young navigator who had taken his flatboat over the mill dam some months before.

Offutt had not yet arrived with his goods; so Abe made himself as useful as possible until he came. Then he vigorously took principal charge for Offutt, both in his store and mill, and soon became a leading factor in the community. Offutt had great confidence in Abe and pushed him forward on every occasion. He did a good deal of bragging about Abe's

outstanding qualities. Offutt was an enthusiastic friend, and he actually declared that Abe knew enough to be President of the United States. He boasted particularly about Abe's great strength and his unusual skill in wrestling.

The Offutt store at New Salem.

There was in the neighborhood of New Salem a settlement called Clary's Grove, which was noted because it was the home of a group of unusually rough, husky fellows, called the Grove boys. One of the leaders of the Clary's Grove boys, Jack Armstrong, was the champion wrestler of the neighborhood. Offutt bragged that Lincoln could throw Jack Amstrong. A match between the two was arranged to take place in a square next Offutt's store. The whole neighborhood was on hand to see the contest. The betting ran high, and there was danger of a fight and a feud. The following version of the match is verified by the Old Salem Lincoln

League. The two stripped for the fray and wrestled "catch as catch can." Abe had been carefully coached by his friend and fellow clerk, Green, who was familiar with Armstrong's method of wrestling. Being short and powerfully built, Armstrong tried to close in with a hip lock and a grapevine trip; but Abe's long and powerful arms kept him off and gradually wore him down. Armstrong finally lost his temper and attempted a foul by bringing his heel down on Abe's instep with such force that he expected the shock of pain would throw Abe off guard. But the blow glanced and only enraged Abe so that he took advantage of Armstrong's forward thrust and with a mighty heave threw him backward over his head. Armstrong's supporters were about to start a general fight, but he got to his feet, grasped Lincoln by the hand, and told the gang that Lincoln had won the match fairly. From that time forth Armstrong was Abe's stanch friend, and Abe became a favorite with the Clary's Grove boys.

Abe entered heartily into all the life of the community. He was a leader in the sports and games and frequently acted as judge in horse races and contests of all kinds. There are many stories of fights that he had in that rough frontier community, but a careful study of all these establishes the fact that here in young Illinois as in Indiana he proved more often to be peacemaker than fighter. However, he did use whatever force was necessary to maintain order and decency in the store where he clerked, especially when women were present. On one

occasion a rough, half-drunken fellow was talking loudly and profanely in the presence of some women customers. Abe warned him several times to stop; and finally, when he could do nothing else, he said, "Well, I guess you just as well take a licking now as any other time." Taking the fellow outside the store, he threw him down and rubbed smartweed into his eyes until the bully howled for mercy.

In this store Lincoln was scrupulously honest and exact in weighing and measuring goods and in making change. On one occasion, when he found he had taken six and one fourth cents too much, he walked three miles after the store closed in the evening to correct the mistake. One morning he found a four-ounce weight on the scales where he had weighed a half pound of tea the evening before. Realizing that the patron had not got all that was due her, he closed the store and took four ounces of tea to the lady's residence.

He made friends of everyone and cultivated all his social tendencies to the fullest extent. One of his best friends in New Salem was Mentor Graham, the schoolmaster, who had first made him clerk at the election. He borrowed books of Graham and spent a good deal of time talking and reading with him. Abe confided to the schoolmaster his desire to improve his education so that he could be better prepared for public service in the way of speaking and writing. He told Graham that he had a "notion to study English grammar." The schoolmaster encouraged him in this and said it was the best thing he could do if he expected to go before the

public in any capacity. Graham helped to find a book for him and finally located one in the possession of a family by the name of Vaner, living about six miles from New Salem. Lincoln immediately walked out to Vaner's and got a copy of Kirkham's Grammar, which had just been published that year, 1831. Lincoln mastered this book with Graham's help. This identical copy of Kirkham's Grammar is now preserved in the public library of Decatur, Illinois. On the title page, written in ink, is the name "Ann Rutledge." It is thought that she and Abe studied out of this book together.

Early in the spring of 1832 Offutt's business began to decline, and Abe saw that he would soon be out of a job. In the meantime his interest in public affairs was constantly increasing. It was a period of great political activity throughout the entire country. There was a vigorous political interest in this section of Illinois, particularly because of the problem of public improvements. The success or failure of little communities like Springfield, Sangamontown, and New Salem were to depend almost entirely upon trade and transportation facilities.

The question of dredging the Sangamon and making it fully navigable, at least from New Salem to the mouth of the river, became a local and finally a state issue. In the midst of this agitation Abraham decided to announce himself as a candidate for the legislature from Sangamon County. Candidates began to announce themselves in January and February, 1832.

Abe had already established a reputation as a speechmaker in the New Salem debating society, even before he thought of running for public office. The first record we have of any public speech by him in Illinois was in March, 1830, soon after the Lincolns had come to Macon County. Abe and John Hanks attended a political meeting, where they heard a candidate make a poor speech. John Hanks is the historian of that episode; he told the story of the speech as follows:

> It was a bad one, and I said Abe could beat it. I turned down a box and Abe made his speech. The other man was a candidate; Abe wasn't. Abe beat him to death, his subject being the navigation of the Sangamon River. The man, after Abe's speech was through, took him aside and asked him where he had learned so much, and how he could do so well. Abe replied, stating his manner and method of reading, what he had read. The man encouraged him to persevere.

This had been an encouragement to Abe and probably first gave him the idea of sometime being a candidate himself.

An incident that occurred about the time the campaign was opening greatly popularized Abe's ideas as to the question of navigating the Sangamon. A prominent citizen of Springfield, Captain Vincent Bogue, claimed that a steamboat could navigate the Sangamon River as far as Springfield; and in January, 1832, while in Cincinnati, he sent the report back home that as soon as the ice broke up he would bring a vessel from Cincinnati to Springfield. Merchants began to advertise delivery of goods by steam-

boat and the *Sangamo Journal* gave glowing accounts of the coming expedition, with the great navigation prospects which it was heralding for the region of the Sangamon.

The late part of March this vessel, the *Talisman*, did come from Cincinnati, and a large concourse of enthusiastic inhabitants of the Sangamon Valley met the boat at Beardstown upon invitation of the captain. Abe was in the company. They were equipped with poles and long-handled axes with which to clear the Sangamon of obstructions wherever necessary to permit the *Talisman* to come up the river. Abe was given the important position of pilot for the remainder of the trip and brought the *Talisman* triumphantly to Springfield. The vessel moved upstream slowly, accompanied by a cavalcade along the banks, who looked upon the tall pilot as a bold and skillful mariner.

Springfield gave the commander of the *Talisman* a glowing reception in which Abe shared modestly. However, the festivities were abbreviated by the warning that the river was going down and it would be necessary for a return voyage to be made at once. Abe was paid forty dollars to pilot the craft back to Beardstown. The return was not so auspicious as the coming and the boat barely got through, creeping along at four miles a day, with scarcely sufficient current to float it. The mill dam at New Salem had to be torn away in part to let the boat through. But Abe took the *Talisman* to Beardstown and then walked back to New Salem. This gave impetus to his campaign in the very beginning and of course

Eugene J. Hall, Oak Park, Illinois

The log cabin that was built by Thomas Lincoln, with the help of his son Abraham, on Goose Nest Prairie, near Farmington, Coles County, Illinois. This picture shows the homestead long after the Lincolns left it and it had been uncared for for many years.

brought the issue of the improvement of the Sangamon very much to the front.

On March 16, 1832, Abe formally declared himself a candidate and published in the *Sangamo Journal* a long letter "to the people of Sangamon County," in which he set forth his principles. His statement opened with the following flourish:

FELLOW CITIZENS: Having become a candidate for the honorable office of one of your representatives in the next general assembly of this state, in accordance with an established custom and the principles of true republicanism, it becomes my duty to make known to you, the people whom I propose to represent, my sentiments with regard to local affairs.

Then follows a very thorough and thoughtful statement of his ideas concerning internal improvements. He advocated the improvement of the Sangamon River at that time as more feasible than the building of a railroad, because "much better suited to our infant resources." He laid out a practical plan whereby the Sangamon could be made navigable "to vessels of from twenty-five to thirty tons burden for at least one half of all common years, and to vessels of much greater burden a part of the time." He advocated a law against usury and proposed amendments to the existing estray and road laws.

He made a remarkable pronouncement on education, as follows:

> Upon the subject of education, not presuming to dictate any plan or system respecting it, I can only say that I view it as the most important subject which we as a people can be engaged in. That every man may receive at least a moderate education, and thereby be enabled to read the histories of his own and other countries, by which he may duly appreciate the value of our free institutions, appears to be an object of vital importance, even on this account alone, to say nothing of the advantages and satisfaction to be derived from all being able to read the Scriptures, and other works both of religious and moral nature, for themselves.
>
> For my part, I desire to see the time when education — and by its means, morality, sobriety, enterprise, and industry — shall become much more general than at present, and should be gratified to have it in my power to contribute something to the advancement of any measure which might have a tendency to accelerate that happy period.

It should be noted here that this first public declaration of Abraham Lincoln at the early age of twenty-three gave significant promise of that remarkable power of clear and simple statement for which he became famous. It is true, of course, that practical reasoning upon such subjects as those related to local politics did not call for such fervent and powerful utterances as the mighty issues of war and slavery brought forth in his later speeches, but his clear and forceful style was beginning to be apparent in the speeches of this early period.

The closing paragraphs of this first youthful utterance are truly noteworthy:

> But, fellow citizens, I shall conclude. Considering the great degree of modesty which should always attend youth, it is probable I have already been more presuming than becomes me. However, upon the subjects of which I have treated, I have spoken as I have thought. I may be wrong in regard to any or all of them; but, holding it a sound maxim that it is better only sometimes to be right than at all times to be wrong, so soon as I discover my opinions to be erroneous, I shall be ready to renounce them.
>
> Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say, for one, that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow men by rendering myself worthy of their esteem. How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition is yet to be developed. I am young, and unknown to many of you. I was born, and have ever remained, in the most humble walks of life. I have no wealthy or popular relations or friends to recommend me. My case is thrown exclusively upon the independent voters of the country; and, if elected, they will have conferred a favor upon me for which I shall be unremitting in my labors to compensate. But, if the good people in their wisdom shall see

fit to keep me in the background, I have been too familiar with disappointments to be very much chagrined.

Thus it was that in March, 1832, less than two years after coming to Illinois, Abraham Lincoln, twenty-three years of age, started on his public career.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A PERIOD OF UNCERTAINTY

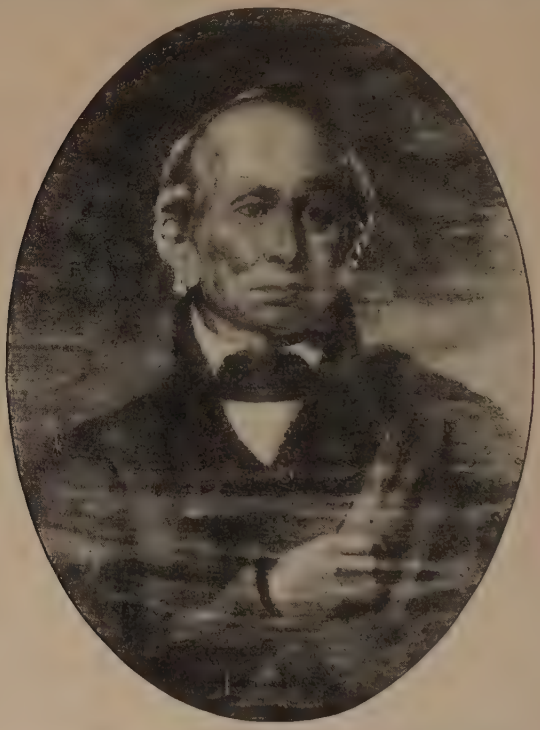
If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it.

THE sentence quoted above is the opening sentence of one of the most impressive speeches Lincoln ever made. It is a fitting introduction to that self-finding period of his life, from 1831 to 1837, spent in little New Salem, Illinois. He was not drifting in any sense through this period, and he certainly knew where he was; but it was very doubtful if he had any idea much of this time as to "whither he was tending." Most of the time he was going as he was driven.

Offutt's store failed about the time Abe announced himself a candidate for the legislature, quite a while before the actual campaign was to begin; and Abe's pioneer promoter, Offutt, salvaged what he could of his assets and went to "parts unknown." Abe closed up the business for the creditors; then, during a brief period in the summer of 1832, he had his first and only experience as a soldier. This was in the Black Hawk War.

The last and most pathetic of all the Indian wars in the Old Northwest occurred in the northwestern part of Illinois in the summer of 1832. It was begun by Black Hawk, the old Sac chief. It was waged for the recovery of the ancient site and burial place of the principal Sac village at the mouth of Rock

River, where Rock Island now is. The lands of this tribe had once covered all the northwestern part of the present state of Illinois, but they had been sold to the United States in 1804 with the understanding



State Historical Society of Wisconsin

Black Hawk. Engraving after a painting from life by R. N. Sully. This painting was made in 1833, while Black Hawk was being held as a prisoner at Fortress Monroe, Virginia.

that the Indians could continue to hunt and raise corn on any part of this land until the land itself was surveyed and sold to bona fide settlers. But

squatters came pushing into this land far ahead of the actual line of settlement. They wanted to take all this region at once, and especially the land at the mouth of the Rock River, where there was an old Sac village site and burying ground.

The Sacs crossed to the western side of the Mississippi after the treaty of 1804, but they returned to this point in one great body each year to renew their tribal fealty and to raise corn. In 1831 and 1832 some "sooner" squatters procured a survey of this spot of land fifty miles ahead of the bona fide settlers and encroached upon the ancient and sacred site. This desecration aroused the broken-hearted old chief, Black Hawk, to assert the doctrine that had been held by Tecumseh and other great Indian leaders. Black Hawk stated his principles as follows:

> My reason teaches me that land cannot be sold. The Great Spirit gave it to his children to live upon, and cultivate, as far as is necessary, for their subsistence; and so long as they occupy and cultivate it they have the right to the soil, but if they voluntarily leave it, then any other people have a right to settle upon it. Nothing can be sold but such things as can be carried away.

Black Hawk was prevailed upon by Indian agitators of his own and other tribes, with the encouragement of British interests, to drive the whites out of the country. On April 6, 1832, with five hundred braves and with all their squaws and children he invaded that region then undergoing survey, and took possession of the site of the ancient Fox village of Prophetstown, six miles from the burial ground at the mouth of Rock River.

Governor Reynolds called for volunteers from the militia of northwestern Illinois to suppress this uprising. By the Illinois military laws all men between the ages of eighteen and forty-five were compelled to belong to the militia and had to meet for drill twice a year under penalty of a fine of one dollar. Having nothing else to do at that time, Abe promptly enlisted as soon as the Governor's call was announced. He wrote the story of this brief experience as follows:

> Abraham joined a volunteer company, and, to his own surprise, was elected captain of it. He says he has not since had any success in life which gave him so much satisfaction. He went to the campaign, served near three months, met the ordinary hardships of such an expedition, but was in no battle. He now owns, in Iowa, the land upon which his own warrants for the service were located.

We can believe that his election as captain was a great encouragement to him. His company was made up of the rough and husky young fellows from the neighborhood of New Salem. It included most of the gang of Clary's Grove boys. The former wrestling champion, Jack Armstrong, was made first sergeant and became one of Lincoln's chief aides. They were a rough pioneer group, and it took a hard-fisted, strong-armed captain such as Abe to maintain discipline.

This company was enrolled April 21, 1832, at Richland, a small village not far from New Salem. From there they marched in "military style" to Beardstown, Illinois, where all the troops assembled. If all the details of Captain Lincoln's experiences

in this brief and picturesque war could be recited, it would make a droll and interesting volume. His was a raw company, and the captain was as raw as the company. He had to get his knowledge of military forms as he went along. One humorous incident has come down to us, showing how Abe's resourcefulness supplied his want of military science. He was marching his company in two platoons of twenty men abreast when they came to a narrow gate through which they had to pass. Captain Lincoln did not know how to give the order to form in single file so they could go "endwise," and the men probably would not have understood him if he had given it; so when they came to the gate, he shouted out that the company would disband for two minutes and form in marching order on the other side of the gate. The boys leaped over the fence or ran through the gate as they pleased and were soon marching regularly upon their way.

Although this particular group did not have to fight any Indians, they had a good deal of fighting and wrestling among themselves and with the soldiers of other companies. Abe was at his best in these campfire sports. He took an active hand in all the sports and games and demonstrated again and again his superiority as a wrestler. He had an opportunity there to indulge his love of story telling to the utmost. Out of this experience he got the materials for many excellent stories which he used later in life. He won the good will and admiration of all his men. Although his company did no fighting and did not even see any fighting Indians, yet they

did reach the very place of Stillman's defeat a short time after that encounter in which Black Hawk had wreaked quick and bloody vengeance on the whites. Shortly after this a lone, unarmed old Indian who had a military pass was brought into camp, and the excited soldiers wanted to put him to death; but Captain Lincoln risked his authority and his own safety to protect the innocent savage.

Abe's company had enlisted for only thirty days. At the expiration of this time the war was not quite over and the Governor, who was with the troops, appealed to the men to stay twenty days more. Most of them went home, but Abe decided to remain. He quaintly explained this decision later: "I was out of work and there would be no danger of more fighting. I could do nothing better than to enlist again."

So Captain Lincoln became a private in a spy battalion on May 27, 1832. He served in this capacity for his full period of twenty days, and then on June 16 he enlisted for thirty days in another company. Here he almost saw service. On June 25 he helped bury five men whom the Indians had killed and scalped the day before at Kellogg's Grove. Long afterward he gave the following description of this incident:

> I remember just how those men looked as we rode up the little hill where their camp was. The red light of the morning sun was streaming upon them as they lay, heads toward us on the ground. And every man had a round, red spot on top of his head, about as big as a dollar, where the redskins had taken his scalp. It was frightful, but it

was grotesque, and the red sunlight seemed to paint everything all over. I remember that one man had on buckskin breeches.

The war finally came to an end before Abe's last enlistment expired, and he was mustered out July 10, 1832, at Whitewater, Wisconsin. His horse had been stolen the night before; so he walked to Peoria with one of his comrades, bought a canoe, and paddled down the Illinois River to Havana. There he sold the canoe and finished the journey to New Salem on foot. His return was less glamorous than his start. Less than three months before, he had entered the war a captain, and was soon on horseback. He returned a private, on foot; but he had some cash in his pocket, and he had accumulated experiences and associations that proved of benefit to him later in his life.

This little Indian war really gave impetus to some notable careers — Colonel Zachary Taylor, General Scott, and General Robert Anderson of Fort Sumter fame were engaged in it. Jefferson Davis also had an important part in the Black Hawk War. After the battle of Bad Ax, when Black Hawk was made a captive, he was put in the care of Lieutenant Jefferson Davis and kept under him in Jefferson Barracks. The magnanimous old chieftain afterward wrote of Davis that "he was a good and brave chief, with whose conduct he was much pleased." Albert Sidney Johnston and Joseph E. Johnston, both of whom became famous Confederate generals, also served as officers in Black Hawk's War. William Cullen Bryant, who was then making a tour of

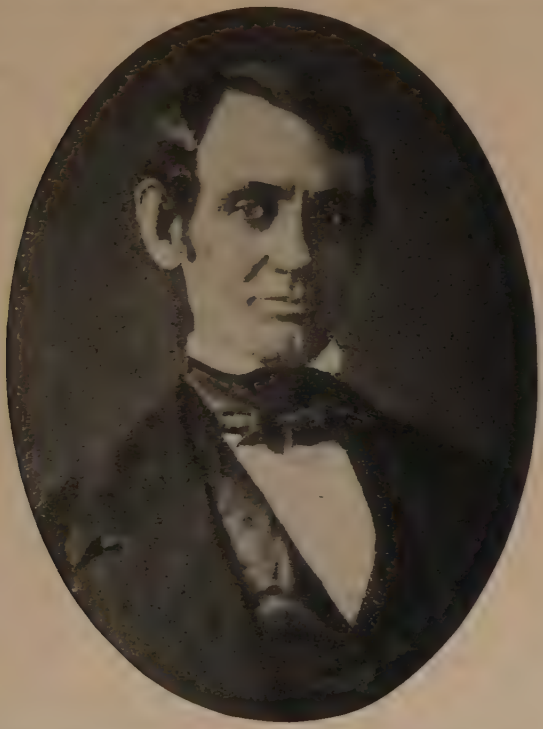
Illinois, saw this army and met Captain Lincoln, whom he described as a "raw youth in whose quaint and pleasant talk" the famous poet took a great deal of interest.

This military campaign was really an important incident in the life of Lincoln. It strengthened his popularity with the people of New Salem and all that section of Sangamon County, and helped to lay a favorable basis for his first political venture.

He never showed a disposition to make capital of this military experience and seldom referred to it in after life except in some humorous connection. At one time, during a debate in Congress in which Lincoln was poking good-humored fun at the pretensions of Lewis Cass, whom he considered a bumptious aspirant for national honors because of a military experience something like his own, he made the following humorous comment:

> By the way, Mr. Speaker, did you know I am a military hero? Yes, sir; in the days of the Black Hawk War I fought, bled, and came away. Speaking of General Cass's career reminds me of my own. I was not at Stillman's defeat, but I was about as near it as Cass was to Hull's surrender; and, like him, I saw the place very soon afterward. It is quite certain I did not break my sword, for I had none to break; but I bent a musket pretty badly on one occasion. If Cass broke his sword, the idea is he broke it in desperation; I bent the musket by accident. If General Cass went in advance of me in picking whortleberries, I guess I surpassed him in charges upon the wild onions. If he saw any live, fighting Indians, it was more than I did, but I had a good many bloody struggles with the mosquitoes; and although I never fainted from the loss of blood, I can truly say I was often very hungry.

When Abe got back to New Salem in July, he was out of a job, but he had a campaign immediately



Lincoln at about the time he was elected to Congress.
After a daguerreotype.

on his hands. The election was to occur on the sixth of August, and he had very little time to finish the canvass which he had barely started before he went to war. He plunged into the campaign with great zeal and did all the electioneering he could. The boys who had been with him in the Black Hawk War boosted their captain loyally. The people for many

miles around the vicinity of New Salem supported the long-legged story teller whom they had already learned to like and to trust.

About all he could do was to mingle with groups wherever possible and talk to the people whenever he got a chance. The farmers always came into town on Saturday afternoons and there were a good many picnic gatherings during this time of year. Public sales were good places for electioneering, and the candidates vied with the auctioneer in "ballyhooing" the crowd. Abe made speeches and told stories wherever he had an opportunity.

His written address to the people announcing himself as a candidate, quoted in part in the preceding chapter, was printed and distributed in the form of a handbill. It was devoted mainly to the subject of improving the Sangamon. Abe was running as a Clay man, and he knew very well that this part of the country was strongly Democratic. He appealed to his friends and neighbors mainly on local issues, and the Democrats of New Salem worked for him because they liked him.

There is only one account of a speech of his in which he made mention of national issues. This was in a meeting at a place called Pappsville. It was a typical political meeting of the time. Just before Abe began his speech, two hot disputants in the crowd started a fight, which was taken up by several others and resulted in a general riot. One of Abe's friends whipped a man in the fight and was being badly mauled by several of the victim's friends. Abe jumped off the platform or

wagon from which he expected to speak, seized the principal assailant of his friend, and "threw him twelve feet." This did more good than all his speaking. It ended the fighting. Abe again mounted the rostrum and made his speech, which was afterward quoted word for word by an admiring hearer:

> Fellow citizens, I presume you all know who I am — I am humble Abraham Lincoln. I have been solicited by many friends to become a candidate for the legislature. My politics are short and sweet, like the old woman's dance. I am in favor of a national bank. I am in favor of the internal improvement system and a high protective tariff. These are my sentiments and political principles. If elected, I shall be thankful; if not, it will be all the same.

Abe lost the election, but he made a fine showing. He summed up the election as follows:

> Returning from the campaign, and encouraged by his great popularity among his immediate neighbors, he the same year ran for the legislature, and was beaten — his own precinct, however, casting its votes 277 for and 7 against him, and that, too, while he was an avowed Clay man, and the precinct the autumn afterward giving a majority of 115 to General Jackson over Mr. Clay. This was the only time Abraham was ever beaten on a direct vote of the people.

Notwithstanding this defeat he felt proud and happy over the complimentary support which he received where he was so well known. He had received all but seven out of 284 votes cast in his own precinct, where there was an opposing party majority of 115.

Four candidates were elected to the legislature

on one ticket by a group vote, and there were thirteen candidates running. The highest vote received by any candidate was 1127. The lowest of the four successful candidates was the Reverend Peter Cartwright, who received 815. Abe stood eighth in the list of thirteen, with 657 votes.

Abe had been a good clerk, and shortly after the election, having nothing else to do, he bought out the partner of William F. Berry and went into the mercantile business. Abe had no money; so he gave a note for his half of the store. Berry was also in debt for all of his interest. The partnership of Berry and Lincoln had scarcely started when one of the other merchants by the name of Rodner was practically closed out of business. The Clary's Grove boys to whom he refused to sell more than two drinks of liquor for a single spree, took charge of the store, helped themselves to the liquor, and got "rip-roaring drunk." Then they knocked out doors and windows, overturned the counters, upset the sugar barrels, and destroyed nearly everything in sight. The disheartened merchant sold out the next day to a man by the name of Green, who took over the stock temporarily for $23 cash and two notes of $188.50 each, secured by mortgage. Abe saw a new opportunity here, and after making an inventory of the stock, he and Berry assumed Green's notes of $377, paid him $265 cash, mostly silver, and gave him in addition a horse, saddle, and bridle that belonged to Berry, for the stock and store. About this time another one of the town grocery stores went to the wall, and the enterprising firm of Lincoln

and Berry bought it at a bargain, giving their joint note in place of cash.

At the beginning of the year 1833 Abe was an equal partner in a firm that had almost a monopoly on the grocery business of New Salem. They had a considerably overstocked store, which they had bought mainly on credit and for which customers were lacking. Abe's partner, Berry, was even a worse business man than Abe. He was a wild young man who indulged in drinking, gambling, and carousing; but notwithstanding this fact, Abe permitted him to handle most of the business. A substantial part of the stock which they had bought consisted of intoxicating liquor; so a tavern keeper's license was taken out on Berry's application in order that they might retail this stock. Neither Lincoln nor Berry were bar tenders. There was no bar, and the liquor was usually sold in quantities of a quart or more along with the groceries. Abe sold very little of this liquor, and drank none of it. He was opposed to this feature of the business, and it finally broke up the partnership. It was in this department of the business in which Berry was most active; he was himself their principal customer.

Customers were few at the Berry and Lincoln store; so Abe spent a great deal of his time either lying on his back stretched out on the counter or outside in the shade of the little shack or a near-by tree, reading and talking. He read and studied Burns and Shakespeare, and scoured the town and community for other books of interest. At this

time Abe formed an odd friendship with a curious person by the name of Jack Kelso. This Kelso was a ne'er-do-well who was barely able to earn a living. He was, notwithstanding, an interesting companion. He was something of a poet and had an extensive knowledge of good literature, from which he could quote with great appreciation. He and Abe were constant companions for several months. This did not help the grocery business, but it did cultivate Abe's love of literature.

During these months Abe began a basic study of law. It was an interesting circumstance by which he got into this line of study. Here is his own word for it:

> One day a man who was migrating to the West drove up in front of my store with a wagon which contained his family and household plunder. He asked me if I would buy an old barrel for which he had no room in his wagon, and which he said contained nothing of special value. I did not want it, but to oblige him I bought it, and paid him, I think, half a dollar for it. Without further examination I put it away in the store, and forgot all about it. Some time after, in overhauling things, I came upon the barrel, and emptying it upon the floor to see what it contained, I found at the bottom of the rubbish a complete edition of *Blackstone's Commentaries*. I began to read those famous works, and I had plenty of time; for during the long summer days, when the farmers were busy with their crops, my customers were few and far between.
>
> The more I read, the more intensely interested I became. Never in my whole life was my mind so thoroughly absorbed. I read until I devoured them.

Of course this kind of business could not last forever; and the store "winked" out. The notes

came due with no money to meet them. Both Lincoln and Berry lost heart in the enterprise and sold out to William and Alexander Trent early in 1834. But neither of the Trents had any money, so they bought the store just as Lincoln and Berry had originally bought it; their notes were accepted for the purchase price. Before these notes became due, the Trent brothers disappeared. The few groceries which they had in the store were seized by creditors and the doors were closed. Lincoln and Berry never recovered anything on the notes or on the stock of goods. Berry soon died in the midst of a wild career, and the settling of the business was left entirely on the shoulders of Abe.

It would have been entirely in keeping with the customs and expectations of the time if he had simply "sloped" under these circumstances — as the Trents and Offutt had done. Most men who failed as Lincoln had done simply left the country. The modern alibi would have been bankruptcy and settlement at little or nothing on the dollar. But Abe had no intention of evading the issues with which he was faced. Although he had a total of more than eleven hundred dollars of debt, which was an appalling load under those circumstances, he assumed it. Speaking later of this action, he said:

> That debt was the greatest obstacle I have ever met in life; I had no way of speculating, and could not earn except by labor, and to earn by labor eleven hundred dollars, besides my living, seemed the work of a lifetime. There was, however, but one way. I went to the credi-

tors and told them that if they would let me alone I would give them all I could earn over my living, as fast as I could earn it.

Nearly all the creditors were trustful and lenient with him and allowed him to take his time. So far as known there was only one exception. A man

The Lincoln-Berry store (right) in the reconstructed village of New Salem.

by the name of Van Bergen, who held one of the notes, brought suit upon it as soon as it became due. Of course he obtained judgment and levied upon Abe's personal property — a horse, saddle, bridle, and surveying instruments — and sold them under the hammer. A well-to-do friend of Abe's, a farmer by the name of James Short, living on Sandridge, a few miles from New Salem, bought up this property for $120 and turned it over to Abe, giving him ample time to repay the debt. Abe paid it in full. In later years when this James Short had removed to California because of financial reverses, he re-

ceived from the White House a letter which contained the information that he had been commissioned Indian Agent by President Abraham Lincoln.

The burden of debt which Abe assumed at this time bore heavily upon him for seventeen years. He always spoke of it as the "national debt," upon which he made payments from time to time as he was able to do it. The last dollar of it was finally canceled in 1849, after he returned from serving a term in Congress.

Before his store failed, Abe was appointed postmaster of New Salem. He could handle this job very conveniently along with his minor duties in the store. This appointment came on May 7, 1833. Postmaster Lincoln had little to do, but what little he had was agreeable to him. Letters were very few, and there were not many newspapers or periodicals of any kind to burden the mails. The rates of postage were very high. It took six cents to carry a single-sheet letter thirty miles, ten cents from thirty to eighty miles, twelve and a half cents from eighty to one hundred fifty miles, and so on up to twenty-five cents for any distance of over four hundred miles. Second and third class matter cost in like proportion, making the expense of carriage for magazines published at a distance almost prohibitive.

Mails were carried by four-horse post coaches between the larger cities. Carriers on horseback brought the mail from central points into small country towns like New Salem; so the mail was irregular in delivery. It was supposed to arrive twice a week, but it more frequently happened

that it came once in a fortnight. Abe scrupulously attended to the delivery of all the mail, generally carrying it from door to door in his hat, oftentimes walking miles out into the country for this purpose.

It was the privilege of the postmaster to read every newspaper and all printed matter that passed through his hands, and Postmaster Lincoln availed himself of this prerogative. After the store was closed, he maintained a "corner" in the building where he could keep up the pretense of a post office. He continued to hold the office even after he went out of the store, up to May 30, 1836. New Salem was slowly dying and the post office itself was closed on the date just mentioned, when it was moved to Petersburg, the new town that was growing up about two miles down the Sangamon River. Abe was New Salem's last postmaster. This office was evidently unimportant, since the appointment had gone to a Whig under the administration of Andrew Jackson, a Democrat.

A more lucrative appointment came to him in the latter part of 1833 or early in January, 1834. The rapid immigration into this part of Illinois all through the thirties made a great deal of surveying necessary. Corners had to be located, section lines run, towns mapped out, and roads surveyed. John Calhoun, county surveyor of Sangamon County, was a man of caliber and a very capable official. He had heard good things of Lincoln; so he sent a messenger to Lincoln at New Salem to ask him to be deputy surveyor. Abe was found in the woods splitting rails between mail deliveries. Abe sat down on a log with the messenger and raised all

the objections he could think of. He didn't know anything about surveying, and besides, he was a follower of Clay, while Calhoun was a Jackson man. In the end he was prevailed upon to go to Springfield and talk the matter over with Calhoun. He finally agreed to accept the appointment with the understanding that it placed him under no political obligations and that he could continue to express his political opinions as he chose. Calhoun agreed to give him time to learn, and helped him procure a textbook on surveying by Flint and Gibson.

Abe sought out his friend Mentor Graham, the schoolmaster, who assisted him all he could in this new study. Lincoln worked over this treatise day and night for six weeks. He shut himself away and worked so hard and tirelessly that his friends became alarmed over his haggard appearance. But in six weeks he mastered Flint and Gibson and everything else he could find relating to the subject of surveying. Then he reported to Calhoun for duty, and was assigned all the territory in the northwest part of the county. He did his first work of record in January, 1834.

There is a tradition, which is not fully verified, that at the beginning he was too poor to buy a chain and used a long, straight grapevine as a substitute. This would not have been surprising, as a good grapevine was about as satisfactory as the old-fashioned surveying chains. The new deputy had a good deal of work to do on roads, farms, and plats. He received three dollars a day when there was work, and in some cases was allowed special fees and mileage.

This kept "soul and body together" and gave him a new experience and a wider interest. All the work he did of which any record has been found was correct and gave satisfaction. This was unusual, for boundary disputes in those days were frequent, and lines had to be established without previous marks of any kind to aid in the surveying. Claimants were sensitive and quite ready to dispute. It is a tribute to Abe's ability, as well as to the confidence of the people in his honesty and skill, that when he made a survey his verdict ended the matter.

Surveyor Lincoln laid out the town of Petersburg, which succeeded to the prosperity that had passed New Salem. It was located about two miles down the Sangamon River from New Salem and became the county seat of Menard County, formed out of Sangamon. This is one of the last big jobs that he did as surveyor. It took him several weeks in the summer of 1836.

Such was the life of Abraham Lincoln in New Salem from 1831 to 1837 — candidate, soldier, storekeeper, postmaster, surveyor, and student. If we judge this period from its financial standpoint, it was a failure; but it was a period of growth and expansion for Abe.

He boarded around in the community, part of the time at the Rutledge Tavern and part of the time in the homes of friends, as economically as possible. His board really cost him no more than a dollar a week, and oftentimes he paid it by the help he gave about the place. He was welcomed everywhere. The good wives of the neighborhood liked to see

Honest Abe come into the home and would gladly put on a plate for him any time. They did his darning and mending. There was no home in which he was more welcome than in the home of his old rival in wrestling, Jack Armstrong. Jack's wife, Hannah, made him one of the family whenever he came out to see them, and he sometimes stayed two or three weeks at a time. Hannah Armstrong foxed on his trousers for him two buckskins, which were the first pay he had received for any private surveying. He would bring the children candy, and rock the cradle while the mother got him something to eat. The children loved him, and he usually had one or more little children sauntering around with him. He enjoyed playing marbles with the small boys as much as he enjoyed wrestling with the big ones.

In his autobiography he gives the following terse statement of his experiences at New Salem, which had covered about six years:

> He was now [at the close of the election of 1832] without means and out of business, but was anxious to remain with his friends who had treated him with so much generosity, especially as he had nothing elsewhere to go to. He studied what he should do — thought of learning the blacksmith trade — thought of trying to study law — rather thought he could not succeed at that without better education. Before long, strangely enough, a man offered to sell, and did sell, to Abraham and another as poor as himself, an old stock of goods, upon credit. They opened as merchants; and he says that was the store. Of course they did nothing but get deeper and deeper in debt. He was appointed postmaster at New Salem — the office

being too insignificant to make his politics an objection. The store winked out. The surveyor of Sangamon offered to depute to Abraham that portion of his work which was within his part of the county. He accepted, procured a compass and chain, studied Flint and Gibson a little, and went at it. This procured bread, and kept soul and body together.

All the time he lived at New Salem he was reading and studying and making friends. When he left, in the beginning of 1837, he had ended the third great period of his life. A period of great uncertainty was over.

CHAPTER EIGHT

COURTSHIP AND MARRIAGE

THE romances of Abraham Lincoln represent a conglomeration of tragedy, comedy, error, fate, mischance, and blessing altogether unique. The element of romance, which was strong in Lincoln's nature, often manifested itself in strange ways, complicating his love affairs and leading to confusion and error.

Abe was inclined toward romance even in early boyhood. In his later life he told a story explaining what he thought was the beginning of love with him:

> Did you ever write out a story in your mind? I did when I was a little codger. One day a wagon with a lady and two girls and a man broke down near us, and while they were fixing up, they cooked in our kitchen. The woman had books and read us stories, and they were the first I had ever heard. I took a great fancy to one of the girls; and when they were gone I thought of her a great deal, and one day when I was sitting out in the sun by the house I wrote out a story in my mind. I thought I took my father's horse and followed the wagon, and finally I found it, and they were surprised to see me. I talked with the girl and persuaded her to elope with me; and that night I put her on my horse, and we started off across the prairie. After several hours we came to a camp, and when we rode up we found it was the one we had left a few hours before, and we went in.
>
> The next night we tried again, and the same thing happened — the horse came back to the same place; and then we concluded that we ought not to elope. I stayed until I had persuaded her father to give her to me. I always meant to write that story out and publish it, and I began once, but I concluded that it was not much of a story. But I think that was the beginning of love with me.

Lincoln always had a most respectful regard for women and girls. This began with his feeling for his mother and sister, both of whom were lost to him in his early youth. He was uniformly considerate where women were concerned — so much so that this was a subject of particular comment among the older women of the community of Gentryville, Indiana, where he grew up.

After he received his first lessons in good manners in Andrew Crawford's school, he made it a practice to lift his hat and bow when he met a girl or woman. Stories have come down from his boyhood days of his early gallantry — of how he "sparked the girls," in the homely language of the day. Abe's "sparking," however, appears to have been rather general, for he seems to have preferred the company of the whole family, telling stories and making jokes around the big fireplace upon which he had placed the biggest backlog. Then, as the sparks flew, Abe would recite literature and history, tell fortunes, and ask riddles for the pleasure of the whole group, along with popping corn and cracking nuts.

Ann Roby, who has already been mentioned in a previous chapter, loved to tell in after years of the time when Abe, in those boy-and-girl days, explained to her the mystery of the revolution of the earth around the sun. She didn't believe it, but Abe convinced her. He made her see that the sun "didn't really go down." She commented on this incident in the following way:

I am now thoroughly satisfied that he knew the general laws of astronomy and the movements of the heavenly

bodies. He was better read then than the world knows or is likely to know exactly. No man could talk to me as he did that night unless he had known something of geography as well as astronomy. He often commented or talked to me about what he had read — seemed to read it out of the book as he went along. He was the learned boy among us unlearned folks. He took great pains to explain; could do it so simply. He was different, too.

This was Abe's kind of wooing, and it evidently touched Ann's mind more than her heart. She later married Allen Gentry. From all that can be gleaned, it seems that Abe was not popular with the girls. They liked and respected him well enough, but he did not attract them very much.

Abraham was a homely boy. His father used to say that "Abe looked like he had been chopped out with the ax and needed the jack plane to smooth him down." He grew so rapidly that the element of proportion in his figure seemed to have been lost. His unusually long arms and long legs, his abnormally big hands and big feet, together with his shy and awkward bearing, his shambling gait, and his uncouth dress, hardly made a figure to command the admiring glances of the youthful belles of early Hoosierdom. His awkward appearance was accentuated by his natural timidity and backwardness, which he was never able to overcome entirely. All through life he found it hard to keep from being bashful in the presence of women.

He was a poor partner in the dancing and singing. He wanted to dance "the worst way," and as Mary Todd said the first time she danced with him, "He

did." Although he loved music, he couldn't sing "for shucks." Dennis Hanks used to tell that Abe liked to sing "Pore Old Ned," but made a "mity pore out of it." He played the jew's-harp a little.

If Abe's heart was ever really touched before he left Indiana at the age of twenty-one, there is no record of it. He liked all the girls and there were some to whom he paid special attention, but no fixed attachment ever resulted.

After he left Indiana, and during his later bachelor days, a friend once joked with him about his lack of success with the girls. He said, "What's the matter, Abe; don't you like the girls?" Abe replied with one of his characteristic stories:

When I was a boy back there in Indiana, my mother made me once a big, fine gingerbread cake. I was sitting out under a tree eating it when a neighbor boy came along and looked at my gingerbread so hungrily that I asked him to have some of it. And he greedily gobbled up all that was left of it. I said to him, "Sam, you must like gingerbread." And he said, "Abe, I reckon there ain't nobody likes gingerbread better than I do, and I reckon there ain't nobody that gets as little uv it."

Abe's first known romance was in his early days at New Salem, Illinois. He lived a part of the time in the local tavern kept by James Rutledge, who was one of the founders of the town. Rutledge had come to that vicinity in 1828 and first settled on Concord Creek, about seven miles north of what afterward became the site of New Salem. He built a dam and started a grist mill and a saw mill in partnership with his nephew, John Camron. It

was this mill which Offutt took over and Lincoln helped run. Rutledge and Camron platted the town of New Salem in 1829, after which Rutledge built the inn where he lived with his family until 1833. James Rutledge was a high-minded man of fine family. One of his ancestors had signed the Declaration of Independence, and others had held high positions in the nation. Although he was born in South Carolina, he lived many years in Kentucky, whence he had moved to Illinois.

The third of his nine children was named Ann Mayes. She was born in Kentucky, January 7, 1813, and was nineteen years old — just four years younger than Abe — when he first met her. Her romantic relations with Abraham Lincoln have carried Ann Rutledge down through history as a being of wraith-like loveliness. She was beautiful, gentle, unusually intelligent, a good conversationalist, and by nature cheerful and kind. She was well liked. She and

The Rutledge tavern at New Salem.

Abe were thrown much in each other's company. They enjoyed each other first because of that rare intelligence which was common to both. She had more schooling than Abe, and she helped him in his early studies. Her name, still preserved upon the title page of Kirkham's Grammar, suggests the enjoyable hours they must have spent together poring over this quaint little book. She was one of the pupils of Mentor Graham; and this friendly schoolmaster was a warm friend of both of them.

There is a note of mystery running through the courtship of Abraham and Ann, because of a broken former attachment which kept recurring as a disturbing element in her thoughts. Notwithstanding all this, she promised in the spring of 1835 to become Lincoln's wife. She wanted to go to school for another year, and arrangements were made for her to attend Jacksonville Academy and live in the home of her brother in Jacksonville.

In the meantime, Lincoln, who had already begun his law studies and had served one term in the legislature, was to be admitted to the bar and get started in business. Then they were to be married. They no doubt enjoyed many happy hours together, especially the summer after their engagement. But the district was besieged by an epidemic of malarial fever, to which both Ann and Abe fell victim. He was able to get the better of the disease; but for Ann it proved fatal. During her early illness Lincoln was kept away from her, but when it became apparent that her condition was serious, he was permitted to spend one agonizing hour with her

alone. She died on August 25, 1835, in her home at Sandridge, seven miles from New Salem, where the family had moved in 1833; but she continues to live in the memory of mankind as a fresh and lovely flower.

Ann Rutledge was buried in Concord Cemetery, a few miles from New Salem, and was later removed to Oakland near Petersburg.

Lincoln often wept over the lonely grave. He said, "The thought of the snow and the rain on her grave fills me with indescribable grief." In later life he told a friend, "I really and truly loved the girl and think often of her now, and I have loved the name of Rutledge to this day." His sorrow was almost beyond endurance. His friends were alarmed over his condition, but there was little they could do for him.

In this crisis which threatened to wreck Lincoln's life, Bowling Green, one of the truest friends Abe ever had, took him to his home a half mile out of New Salem. This was a place of peace and quiet under the brow of a high bluff, where the affectionate companionship of Bowling and Nancy Green helped Lincoln to regain his self-control. Once more he began busily adapting himself to affairs in New Salem and to his widening circle of interests. His diversity of interests and his ready contacts with people under all circumstances were his means of relief from the heavy strains of melancholy that often beset him all through life. It is believed, however, that his sadness over Ann Rutledge's death never entirely left him.

Sometime in the fall of 1836 one of the married women of New Salem was making a visit to her people in Kentucky. Remembering that Abe had seemed to like her sister, Mary Owens, when she had visited New Salem three years before, she banteringly suggested to him that she would bring her sister back with her if he would consent to become her brother-in-law.

Apparently in this same spirit of banter, Abe accepted the proposal and the sister came. This quick response was something of a shock to Abe. He had not expected it. Besides, it seemed that Mary had changed in his eyes during the three years since he had seen her. She was twenty-eight years old now, one year older than he, and a large, matronly-looking woman; but he felt bound by his joking agreement with her sister, and in a half-hearted way proposed to Mary Owens and was accepted.

Before taking any final step in the engagement, he moved to Springfield in 1837 to begin the practice of law. He wrote Mary soon afterward, advising her against marrying him: "You would have to be poor without the means of hiding your poverty" in a town where there was a "great deal of flourishing about in carriages." If she decided to come to Springfield, he would do all in his power to make her happy and contented; but he added: "My opinion is that you had better not do it. You have not been accustomed to hardship, and it may be more severe than you now imagine." It is certain that Mary Owens was a woman of good sense and commendable spirit, for sometime later she refused

to marry the hesitant Abraham. Abraham expressed his chagrin over the affair in a long letter to a friend, in which he said he had come "to the conclusion never again to think of marrying."

Miss Owens was afterward happily married. In later life she commented upon this affair in a shrewd and sensible way. She said she found Lincoln "deficient in those little links which make up the chain of a woman's happiness."

Some time after this he had a near affair with a very sprightly young girl of sixteen. This was Miss Sarah Rickard, who stayed at Bill Butler's house in Springfield, where Lincoln took his meals. She was a sister of Mrs. Butler. Sarah and Abe were in each other's company frequently, and he took her occasionally to parties and public places. He also made her presents. It seems that he made a semi-proposal to the precocious Sarah. He pointed out to her that the Sarah of the Bible became the wife of Abraham, and since she was named Sarah and he Abraham it must be foreordained that she was to marry him. It doesn't appear, however, that there ever was a formal engagement, although the case did assume a sufficiently serious aspect to lead Sarah's sister, Mrs. Butler, to interfere on the ground that Sarah was entirely too young to think of marrying. She appears to have been a sensible girl, for she said of Abe afterward, "I felt I was beginning to like him, but you know that his peculiar manner and general deportment would not be likely to fascinate a young lady entering the society world."

Abraham Lincoln met Mary Todd in 1839, when she was twenty-two. She had come from her home in Lexington, Kentucky, to live with her sister, Mrs. Ninian Edwards, in Springfield. It is generally believed that she left her father's home to live with her sister because she could not endure the domination of her stepmother. Edwards had served in the legislature with Lincoln as one of the "Long Nine"; so Lincoln was well acquainted with the Edwards family. Their home was one of culture and hospitality. Mary Todd was a typical Kentucky girl of one of the very best Kentucky families of that day. Her father, Robert S. Todd, was a prominent citizen and president of a bank in Lexington, Kentucky. Her grandfather, Levi Todd, was, along with George Rogers Clark and Daniel Boone, one of the heroic founders of Kentucky. Mary had been reared and educated as an aristocrat. She had attended exclusive schools and learned French, classical music, art, and *belles lettres*, together with all the niceties of manner, conversation, and dress that prevailed in the circles in which she moved. Her spirit was in perfect accord with her birth and training. She was sweet and gracious, and at the same time impetuous and independent; she was also very "demanding." Note the perfect contrast which she bore to Abraham Lincoln in appearance as well as in manner. She was quite small and plump, quick in speech and action, flashing, and vivid. She was also ambitious and high-tempered.

She quickly became one of the belles of Springfield and was much sought after. Both Stephen A.

Douglas and James T. Shields were among her suitors; at least, they called upon her frequently. She was constantly moving in the forefront of the little social whirl of Springfield, and so met Lincoln, who, in spite of his reticence and diffidence, was gradually drawn into the social life of the capital city, where he was rapidly becoming established as a leading politician and lawyer. He admired the vivid Mary and liked to be near her. Strange as it may seem, she was greatly attracted by the awkward Abraham. She was everything that he was not. She had family pride, lofty manners, social vanity, class culture, and overwhelming social ambition. She was small and beautiful and extremely fond of fine clothes, which she loved to display in showy promenade and giddy dance. Lincoln was her exact opposite; but she seems to have sensed his potential greatness better than anyone of that day. There is sufficient tradition to make it believable that she actually declared more than once that she wanted to be the wife of a President and she thought Lincoln was going to the White House.

It may be believed that as much upon her initiative as his an attachment was formed between them which resulted in an engagement to be married. It seems that Mary's sister and brother-in-law, the Edwards, tried to dissuade her from the match, notwithstanding their friendship for Lincoln. They saw the social incongruity of such a union. They had very rational fears that Abe would not prove to be a satisfactory husband for Mary. Notwithstanding all this the wedding day was set — but the

ceremony did not occur at that time. There is some dispute about the details of this incident, but it is certain that the engagement was temporarily broken.

There is a mystery attached to Lincoln's conduct in this situation that has never been explained. Whatever the cause of his strange action, he was plunged into almost overwhelming melancholy because of it. The shroud of gloom in which he enveloped himself was well expressed in a letter to his law partner, Mr. Stuart, on January 23, 1841:

> I am now the most miserable man living. If what I feel were equally distributed to the whole human family, there would not be one cheerful face on the earth. Whether I shall ever be better, I cannot tell; I awfully forebode I shall not. To remain as I am is impossible; I must die or be better, it appears to me. The matter you speak of on my account you may attend to as you say, unless you shall hear of my condition forbidding it. I say this because I fear I shall be unable to attend to any business here, and a change of scene might help me.

During this period perhaps his greatest personal friend was Joshua F. Speed, the merchant, with whom he had roomed when he first came to Springfield, but who had moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where he was living at this time. In his deep despondency, Lincoln visited for several weeks in the summer and fall of 1841 in Speed's hospitable summer home. There he received needed consolation from this faithful friend, aided by the mother and sister, just as he had in the home of Bowling Green after Ann Rutledge's death. Speed was himself contemplating marriage at this time and seems to have been

Matthew B. Brady

Mrs. Abraham Lincoln (Mary Todd Lincoln), as she appeared at a White House reception. This photograph is one of many that Brady took during the fifties and sixties of persons prominent in American politics. He also took many photographs of soldiers and camps, and some actual battle scenes during the Civil War. The Brady negatives, most of them held by the War Department, are priceless, historically.

affected a little later with a state of mind somewhat like that of Lincoln. Many letters of intimate personal confidence were exchanged between them after Lincoln's return from Louisville. Speed finally overcame his doubts and married in February, 1842. In March he wrote Lincoln that he was far happier than he had expected to be. Whereupon Lincoln wrote him the following exuberant felicitation:

> It cannot be told how it now thrills me with joy to hear you say you are "far happier than you ever expected to be." That much I know is enough. I know you too well to suppose your expectations were not, at least, sometimes extravagant, and if the reality exceeds them all, I say: Enough, dear Lord. I am not going beyond the truth when I tell you that the short space it took me to read your last letter gave me more pleasure than the total sum of all I have enjoyed since the fatal first of January, 1841. Since then it seems to me I should have been entirely happy, but for the never-absent idea that there is one still unhappy whom I have contributed to make so. That still kills my soul. I cannot but reproach myself for even wishing to be happy while she is otherwise. She accompanied a large party on the railroad cars to Jacksonville last Monday, and on her return spoke, so that I heard of it, of having enjoyed the trip exceedingly. God be praised for that.

All during this time, mutual friends were trying to bring about the reconciliation of Abraham and Mary. In the meantime there happened a ludicrous event — the near duel between Shields and Lincoln, which in a strange manner helped to bring about a renewed understanding.

It was a common practice of the day to make veiled personal and political attacks by anonymous

letters which were published in the columns of the newspapers. There was a period in which Lincoln indulged in this custom to a considerable extent. The editor of the *Sangamo Journal* of Springfield was a close personal friend of Abe's, and the columns of the paper were always open to him. It is known that he wrote many leading editorials without signing his name. He also wrote many anonymous communications to which he signed fictitious names.

James T. Shields was an attorney in Springfield. He had come into Illinois two years after Lincoln came. While teaching school at Kaskaskia he studied law and was sent to the legislature at the very beginning of his law practice. He was three years older than Lincoln, having been born in 1806 in Tyrone County, Ireland. He had led a strenuous life as soldier, sailor, and adventurer before coming to Illinois — narrowly escaping death by shipwreck and surviving a serious wound while fighting in Florida. He was versed in military science and in fencing, having been taught by veterans who had served in Napoleonic wars; he had also been a master of fencing in a school at Quebec at the early age of nineteen. He was a successful lawyer, a good politician, and an eligible bachelor. True to his impetuous nature he carried himself with a sort of bustling importance that made him a tempting object of ridicule. Although he was generally popular, Abe for some unexplained reason did not like him.

After serving successfully in the legislature, Shields was appointed State Auditor of Public Accounts. This office became the center of some important

activities in 1842, as a result of the failure of the State Bank of Illinois and the strained financial conditions of the state, due to depleted currency. As State Auditor, Shields issued a circular in August, 1842, suspending the collection of revenues for that year until the meeting of the legislature. This act was fully justified by law and seems to have been in reasonable accord with sound public policy. But Shields was a Democrat, and his policies called forth some Whig opposition. The somewhat officious phraseology in which this circular was couched called from Abraham an anonymous communication of droll criticism and cutting ridicule. It was published in the *Sangamo Journal* on September 2, 1842, and was signed "Aunt Rebecca," purporting to be from a widow who lived in an outlying district referred to as the "Lost Townships." The letter satirized Shields' policy and ridiculed his vanity and gallantry.

Abe's "Aunt Rebecca" letter was quickly followed by two other communications. These, however, were not written by Abe. They were written by Mary Todd and her friend, Julia Jayne, who later became Mrs. Lyman Trumbull. The first of these was also signed "Aunt Rebecca." It ridiculed Shields even more grossly than Lincoln's letter had done and ended with a proposal of marriage from the forlorn widow to the gallant auditor. At the same time it taunted him unmercifully as a fire eater who was "threatenin' to take personal satisfaction" and indicated that the only thing he could fight with would have to be "somewhat like a shillalah."

This letter was followed shortly by an anonymous

A side view of Lincoln's home at Springfield, Illinois. The Lincolns lived here from about 1845 to 1861. The house stands on a corner lot in a quiet residential section.

article in the form of a crude poetic jingle of eighteen lines, signed "Cathleen." It celebrated the wedding of the widow and the Irishman. Here is a mild extract:

> The pride of the North from the Emerald Isle
> Has been woo'd and won by a woman's sweet smile.
> The combat's relinquished, old loves all forgot;
> To the widow he's bound. Oh! bright be his lot!

Shields sent a representative straightway to the editor of the *Sangamo Journal* and demanded the name of the author of those offensive letters. The editor delayed the matter all he could and called Abe in to talk it over. Abe was in a predicament.

He had written the first article and had no intention to deny it, but he had not written the others and his gallantry would not permit him to lay the blame where it belonged, upon Mary Todd and her chum, Julia Jayne. So in this confused situation he told the editor to inform Shields that he was the offending author.

Duels were much in vogue in those days, especially in street talk and in the papers. Though casualties seldom resulted, challenges were frequent. Shields immediately sent Lincoln a challenge. Lincoln tried to get out of it honorably, but Shields insisted that he could have satisfaction only by the shedding of blood. By custom, Lincoln was to name the terms and weapons; so he gave instructions to his second, E. H. Merriman, to convey to Shields' second, Whitesides, the following statement:

> In case Whitesides shall signify a wish to adjust this affair without further difficulty, let him know that if the present papers be withdrawn and a note from Mr. Shields asking to know if I am the author of the articles of which he complains and asking that I shall make him gentlemanly satisfaction if I am the author, and this without menace, or dictation as to what the satisfaction shall be, a pledge is made that the following answer shall be given:
>
> I did write the "Lost Townships" letter which appeared in the Journal of the 2d instant, but had no participation in any form in any other article alluding to you. I wrote that wholly for political effect — I had no intention of injuring your personal or private character or standing as a man or a gentleman; and I did not then think, and do not now think, that that article could produce or has produced that effect against you; and had I anticipated such an effect, I would have forborne to write it. And I

will add that your conduct toward me, so far as I know, had always been gentlemanly; and that I had no personal pique against you, and no cause for any.

If this should be done, I leave it with you to arrange what shall and what shall not be published. If nothing like this is done, the preliminaries of the fight are to be —

First. Weapons: Cavalry broadswords of the largest size, precisely equal in all respects and such as now used by the cavalry company at Jacksonville.

Second. Position: A plank ten feet long, and from nine to twelve inches broad, to be firmly fixed on edge, on the ground, as the line between us, which neither is to pass his foot over upon forfeit of his life. Next a line drawn on the ground on either side of said plank and parallel with it, each at the distance of the whole length of the sword and three feet additional from the plank; and the passing of his own such line by either party during the fight shall be deemed a surrender of the contest.

Third. Time: On Thursday evening at five o'clock, if you can get it so; but in no case to be at a greater distance of time than Friday evening at five o'clock.

Fourth. Place: Within three miles of Alton, on the opposite side of the river, the particular spot to be agreed on by you.

Any preliminary details coming within the above rules you are at liberty to make at your discretion; but you are in no case to swerve from these rules, or to pass beyond their limits.

September 19, 1842

On September 22, 1842, the principals with their seconds, surgeons, and a few friends went to Bloody Island in the Mississippi River, the place chosen for the encounter. While preparations were being made, the principals rested on logs on opposite sides of the field. One of the spectators afterward wrote this graphic story of the incident:

I watched Lincoln closely while he sat on his log awaiting the signal to fight. His face was grave and serious. I could discern nothing suggestive of "Old Abe," as we knew him. I never knew him to go so long before without making a joke, and I began to believe he was getting frightened. But presently he reached over and picked up one of the swords, which he drew from its scabbard. Then he felt along the edge of the weapon with his thumb, like a barber feels the edge of his razor, raised himself to his full height, stretched out his long arms and clipped off a twig from above his head with the sword. There wasn't another man of us who could have reached anywhere near that twig, and the absurdity of that long-reaching fellow fighting with cavalry sabers with Shields, who could walk under his arm, came pretty near making me howl with laughter. After Lincoln had cut off the twig, he returned the sword to the scabbard with a sigh and sat down, but I detected the gleam in his eye, which was always the forerunner of one of his inimitable yarns, and fully expected him to tell a side-splitter, there in the shadow of the grave — Shields' grave.

While proceedings were slowly going forward, some influential friends arrived and interposed their good offices in such a way that the encounter was averted.

This near duel caused a good deal of comment afterward which was very distasteful to Abraham. In later life he seemed to take offense at any mention of it. When it was called to his attention during the senatorial campaign of 1858 that frequent questions were asked even in the Eastern states about this duel, Lincoln said, "If all the good things I have ever done are remembered as long and well as my scrape with Shields, it is plain I shall not soon be forgotten."

However, the duel taught Abe a much-needed lesson. He was always scrupulously careful from that time forth never to inflict a personal wound by anything he said or wrote. The best expression that we have from him as to this fixed principle of conduct is found in his advice while President to a young officer who had been court-martialed for quarreling with one of his fellows:

> The advice of a father to his son, "Beware of entrance to a quarrel, but, being in, bear 't that the opposer may beware of thee," is good, but not the best. Quarrel not at all. No man, resolved to make the most of himself, can spare time for personal contention. Still less can he afford to take all the consequences, including the vitiating of his temper and the loss of self-control. Yield larger things to which you can show no more than equal right; and yield lesser ones, though clearly your own. Better give your path to a dog than be bitten by him in contesting for the right. Even killing the dog would not cure the bite.

Probably no comment could throw any rational light upon just how and why this quarrel with Shields helped patch up the tangled relations of Abraham and Mary Todd, but such was its effect. The marriage came, almost suddenly, on November 4, 1842. They planned to be married at the parsonage and kept their plans secret until the morning of the day set. Then Mr. and Mrs. Edwards insisted upon a home wedding, and notwithstanding the brief notice, they made it a genuine social affair. There were two bridesmaids, forty guests, and a bountiful supper.

Abe was at that time thirty-three years of age, and Mary was twenty-three. They began their

married life in rooms at the Globe Tavern, where their first son, Robert, was born August 1, 1843. Soon after this they purchased the house at the corner of Jackson and Eighth Streets, which is still the Lincoln Homestead. They lived there until they left for Washington in 1861. This home was the birthplace of all the children except Robert.

Four children, all of them boys, were born of this marriage: Robert in 1843, Edward in 1846, Willie in 1850, and Thomas (Tad) in 1853. Edward died at the age of four, and Willie died in the White House in 1862. Thomas, better known as Tad, died in Chicago in 1870, on his return from college abroad. Robert lived to be 83, dying in 1926. Mrs. Lincoln died in 1882 in the Edwards home in Springfield where she had been married. All the family except Robert are buried in the Lincoln tomb with the President.

Robert Todd Lincoln was a very successful man and accumulated a fortune of several millions. He never made any pretension either to success or prominence and often passed himself off modestly with the remark, "My father was a great man; I am not." He was educated at Harvard and took an honorable part in the Civil War as aide to General Grant. He was a successful lawyer and business man and served with distinction in the Cabinet of Garfield and Arthur as Secretary of War. At the time of his death he was president of the Pullman Car Company, with which he first started as attorney. Robert Lincoln had a son, Abraham, who died at the age of nineteen. Two daughters survived him.

There is no living descendant of Abraham Lincoln who bears the Lincoln name.

Many interesting things have been written and said of the domestic life of the oddly mated Abraham and Mary. Their marriage was termed by many a policy union, from which he derived social prestige and she, public prominence. Certainly they supplemented each other to a remarkable degree. A typical story is told with satisfaction in Springfield as to how the Lincoln house became a two-story building. It was a story-and-a-half structure when Abe bought it. Mary began insisting from the very first that a story should be added — that it should be built up into a full two-story house. She said that "everybody who was quality" in Kentucky lived in a two-story house. But Abe was very dilatory in making the improvement, and besides he never had enough money ahead to do it; so on one occasion when he was away on the circuit for several weeks, the enterprising Mary had an extra story put on the house. When Abe returned, he looked the two-story house over with great surprise, and walking on past, inquired of a passer-by where Abraham Lincoln lived. His house was pointed out to him, and Abe slowly ambled back and knocked at the door. Mary was fully equal to the occasion. She had observed the whole performance through the window; so when she opened the door she did not recognize the tall stranger. He had to introduce himself before he was admitted.

Mrs. Lincoln had a vital influence on the life of the President, publicly as well as privately. She

brought great emphasis to his Kentucky traditions, which so influenced his attitude toward slavery and the war. He enjoyed visiting with her in her father's home in Lexington and always kept in close touch with political conditions there.

She was a stimulus to Abe always in the matter of advancing himself politically, for she was possessed of great ambition to see him in high places. She had an abiding faith that he would attain great heights, and she kept him from small things. Mary did much to awaken Abe's slumbering ambitions and make them real. But for her, he might have been entirely lost in dreamland. She brought him back to earth again and again, and kept his big feet, if not always his spirit, on solid ground. It may be taken as naïvely significant that in Beveridge's great life of Lincoln the story of his marriage is placed in the chapter on "Discipline."

CHAPTER NINE

POLITICIAN

ABRAHAM LINCOLN was an attorney-at-law part of the time, but he was by profession a politician. For that reason this chapter on his politics is given precedence to that on his law experience. He was influenced in his choice of the law because of his prior interest and a small success already achieved in politics. He had been a candidate for office twice and had been elected to the legislature before he decided to practice law. Had it not been for this interest in politics, he would most likely have chosen to be a blacksmith.

His very first expression of his idea of politics shows that he considered it an avenue to honorable public service. In his declaration of principles as a candidate for the legislature in Sangamon County, Illinois, when twenty-three years old, he made this conclusive statement, which has been quoted previously:

> Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say, for one, that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed of my fellow men by rendering myself worthy of their esteem. How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition is yet to be developed.

In other words, his purpose in entering politics was to win the esteem of his fellow men by worthy public service. That was his ambition. It was his conception of politics as a profession. He never departed from this purpose, which was his first youthful aspiration; and he spent the remainder of his life trying to accomplish it.

We do not know when Lincoln first became interested in politics. He was too young in his Kentucky days, though he may have felt the spirit of those stormy years of Kentucky's early statehood, when the brilliant young Henry Clay was establishing his leadership.

Lincoln came into Indiana the very year she began her political career as a state. Two of his Hoosier schoolmasters were politicians and office holders. His reading and study and mingling in all the activities of his neighbors tended to cultivate in him an interest in politics.

He was in Indiana when Andrew Jackson rose to greatness. The Lincolns were all Jackson Democrats, and Abe used to "holler for Jackson." Mrs. Josiah Crawford told the biographer Herndon that in the campaign of 1828 Abe used to sing:

> Let auld acquaintance be forgot
> And never brought to mind.
> May Jackson be our President,
> And Adams left behind.

John Hanks is authority for the story that even after the removal to Illinois, Abe threatened to whip a man who said some mean things about "Old Hickory." But he was all the while reading Henry Clay's speeches, and he soon became a pronounced Clay man. It was through his admiration for Clay that he became an Illinois Whig and the Whig candidate for the legislature from Sangamon County in 1832. That was the only time in all his life that "Abraham was ever beaten on a direct vote of

the people," although he was later beaten many times in caucuses and conventions by the schemes of political leaders. Abe ran for the legislature again in 1834 and was elected by the highest vote cast for any of the four successful candidates. He was also reëlected for the next three terms — 1836, 1838, and 1840.

Before Lincoln went to Vandalia to enter the legislature the first time, he got his first tailor-made suit, which cost him sixty dollars. Although he was never particularly concerned about his personal appearance or ever spent very much money on his wardrobe, he was wise enough to see that only well-dressed men could hope to succeed at the state capital and so was willing to spend what must have seemed to him like a huge sum of money at this time in order to make a proper appearance.

Lincoln's circle of acquaintance was widened, and his popularity was strengthened during his years in the legislature. He cultivated the esteem of his fellow men in every possible way. Everywhere he made speeches, told stories, and discussed public issues. On one occasion, when out campaigning, he came to a field where many laborers were harvesting the wheat, and one of them made the bantering remark that he wouldn't vote for anybody who couldn't help out with the cradle. Whereupon Abe "shucked" his coat, picked up the cradle, and led the entire band down the field with long, swinging strokes. He got all the votes of those laborers.

In the campaign of 1836 he issued a brief platform, which was published in the *Sangamo Journal*

and which may be taken as a second formal written statement of his political principles:

New Salem, *June* 13, 1836

To the Editor of the Journal:

In your paper of last Saturday I see a communication, over the signature of "Many Voters," in which the candidates who are announced in the *Journal* are called upon to "show their hands." Agreed. Here's mine.

I go for all sharing the privileges of the government who assist in bearing its burdens. Consequently, I go for admitting all whites to the right of suffrage who pay taxes or bear arms (by no means excluding females).

If elected, I shall consider the whole people of Sangamon my constituents, as well those that oppose as those that support me.

While acting as their representative, I shall be governed by their will on all subjects upon which I have the means of knowing what their will is; and upon all others I shall do what my own judgment teaches me will best advance their interests. Whether elected or not, I go for distributing the proceeds of the sales of the public lands to the several states, to enable our state, in common with others, to dig canals and construct railroads without borrowing money and paying the interest on it.

If alive on the first Monday in November, I shall vote for Hugh L. White for President.

Very respectfully,

A. Lincoln

There was little that could be called outstanding in his career of four terms — eight years — in the Illinois legislature. There was a good deal of excitement and activity, though, over the humdrum details of building roads, canals, railroads, etc., in this pioneer era of the prairie state. Abe bore his full share of the responsibility, looking after the interests of his con-

stituents and fighting for the welfare of his party. During his second term he was his party's floor leader, and during his third and fourth terms he was their candidate for speaker; but as the Whigs were in minority, he was not elected.

National issues received a good deal of attention even in state legislatures in that day, and Abe got a lot of opportunity for study of important national questions, particularly those relating to currency and finance. He served throughout the important period of struggle over national and state banks and over local and general public improvements.

His first reported speech as a member of the legislature reflects his method of argument and his attitude toward fellow members. He spoke against a resolution which had been introduced attacking the state bank and demanding an inquiry into its affairs. The principal champion of this resolution was Mr. Linder, a man of considerable prominence, whom Abe took great delight in chaffing with good-humored ridicule. His speech on this occasion was in part as follows:

Mr. Chairman, lest I should fall into the too common error of being mistaken in regard to which side I design to be upon, I shall make it my first care to remove all doubt on that point, by declaring that I am opposed to the resolution under consideration, *in toto*. Before I proceed to the body of the subject, I will further remark that it is not without a considerable degree of apprehension that I venture to cross the track of the gentleman from Coles [Mr. Linder]. Indeed, I do not believe I could muster a sufficiency of courage to come in contact with that gentleman, were it not for the fact that he, some days since, most

graciously condescended to assure us that he would never be found wasting ammunition on small game. On the same fortunate occasion he further gave us to understand that he regarded himself as being decidedly the superior of our common friend from Randolph [Mr. Shields]; and feeling, as I really do, that I, to say the most of myself, am nothing more than the peer of our friend from Randolph, I shall regard the gentleman from Coles as decidedly my superior also; and consequently, in the course of what I shall have to say, whenever I shall have occasion to allude to that gentleman I shall endeavor to adopt that kind of court language which I understand to be due to decided superiority. In one faculty, at least, there can be no dispute of the gentleman's superiority over me and most other men; and that is the faculty of entangling a subject so that neither himself, nor any other man, can find head or tail to it.

He further said in attacking the resolution:

It is an old maxim, and a very sound one, that he that dances should always pay the fiddler. Now, sir, in the present case, if any gentlemen whose money is a burden to them choose to lead off a dance, I am decidedly opposed to the people's money being used to pay the fiddler. No one can doubt that the examination proposed by this resolution must cost the state some ten or twelve thousand dollars; and all this to settle a question in which the people have no interest and about which they care nothing.

He declared that this hostility to the bank was inspired by politicians rather than by the people. It is interesting to note here his attitude toward politicians:

Mr. Chairman, this work is exclusively the work of politicians — a set of men who have interests aside from the interests of the people, and who, to say the most of

them, are, taken as a mass, at least one step removed from honest men. I say this with the greater freedom, because, being a politician myself, none can regard it as personal.

During his last term in the state legislature he introduced a resolution prescribing qualifications for teachers. An act was passed later establishing a common school system in Illinois, which put into effect the idea of his resolution.

Perhaps Lincoln's most important service during his entire legislative career was in leading the fight to remove the state capital from Vandalia to Springfield. Springfield was the county seat of Sangamon County. It was better located than Vandalia for a state capital and pushed its claims vigorously.

Sangamon County was represented in the legislature of 1836–1837 by seven representatives and two senators, who were known as the "Long Nine." Each of them was over six feet tall, and their total length was fifty-five feet. Abe was the tallest of them all. He was their leader, and he manipulated this little block of fighting Sangamonites with such skill throughout the session as to win the capital fight. This made him the idol of Springfield.

In this movement he evidently played every known form of politics in the way of logrolling. The "Long Nine" were accused of exchanging their votes *en bloc* on every subject for the sake of winning the capital. There is not the slightest evidence, however, that Abraham did anything that was in any way shady or that he intentionally sacrificed any public interest to gain a point. He simply played politics according to the means at hand. There was nothing else to

do. Springfield was a better place for the capital than Vandalia. Something had to be done, also, for internal improvements. He worked on these two projects together.

The capital site was won for Springfield in connection with a gigantic public improvement scheme which collapsed in a few years. Although the legislators were probably right in principle, the execution of their plans was inefficient and open to censure. Six years after this Governor Ford condemned the means by which the capital removal was brought about, in these unsparing words:

> Thus, it was made to cost the state six millions of dollars to remove the seat of government from Vandalia to Springfield, half of which sum would have purchased all the real estate in that town at three prices.

Because of his popularity in Springfield over this capital victory, he removed to Springfield from New Salem about the middle of April, 1837, to begin the practice of law. From this time forth he was a leader of the Whigs throughout the state. He was on the Harrison electoral ticket for Illinois in 1840 and campaigned everywhere in the state. Although Harrison did not carry Illinois, Lincoln was elected to the legislature for the last time that year. He says in his autobiography: "After 1840 he declined a reëlection to the legislature. He was on the Harrison electoral ticket in 1840 and on that of Clay in 1844, and spent much time and labor in both those canvasses." It was in the Clay campaign that he made his only return to his old home in Spencer County, Indiana, and renewed his old acquaintances there.

There is no doubt that Abraham had a desire for public office, but it is very clear that this came from his ambition to be of public service. He never departed from his first youthful ambition, that of being "truly esteemed of his fellow men." He never tried to use public office for selfish ends, unless his own advancement through rendering genuine public service could be called a selfish end. He wanted to go to Congress in 1843, but was defeated for the nomination. He was gratified that the new county of Menard, which had been formed out of Sangamon and included his old home of New Salem, gave him all the assistance it could in this campaign. He wrote an interesting letter about it to one of his friends there:

It is truly gratifying to me to learn that while the people of Sangamon have cast me off, my old friends of Menard, who have known me longest and best, stick to me. It would astonish, if not amuse, the older citizens to learn that I (a stranger, friendless, uneducated, penniless boy, working on a flatboat at ten dollars per month) have been put down here as the candidate of pride, wealth, and aristocratic family distinction. Yet so, chiefly, it was. There was, too, the strangest combination of church influence against me. Baker is a Campbellite, and therefore, as I suppose, with few exceptions, got all that church. My wife has some relations in the Presbyterian churches and some with the Episcopal churches; and therefore, wherever it would tell, I was set down as either the one or the other, while it was everywhere contended that no Christian ought to go for me, because I belonged to no church, was suspected of being a deist, and had talked about fighting a duel. With all these things Baker of course had nothing to do. Nor do I complain of them.

As to his own church going for him, I think that was right enough, and as to the influences I have spoken of in the other, though they were very strong, it would be grossly untrue and unjust to charge that they acted upon them in a body, or were very near so. I only mean that those influences levied a tax of a considerable per cent upon my strength throughout the religious community.

Abe practiced law from 1840 to 1846, but all the while angled for a chance to go to Congress; and in 1846 he was nominated and elected. He had a lively campaign with the Reverend Peter Cartwright.

This famous old preacher was a strong-armed apostle of backwoods Methodism. He had preached in Kentucky during the time when the Lincolns lived there. Later he rode the Salt Creek circuit in Indiana during Lincoln's residence in Spencer County. There was never a more stalwart or uncompromising minister of the Christian faith than he. Peter Cartwright condemned weak-kneed members of the church with the same unsparing intolerance with which he condemned outright sinners; and his fulminations were leveled against the high as well as the low. Although he was a worshiper of Andrew Jackson politically, he said of Jackson, "If he's a sinner, God will damn him as quick as he would a Guinea nigger." He had moved to Sangamon County, Illinois, before the Lincolns came there. When Abraham first ran for the legislature in 1832, Cartwright was also a candidate, although they were not direct opponents, since four men were elected out of a number of candidates on a general ticket. When Lincoln ran for Congress in

1846, Cartwright was his opponent on the Democratic ticket and was unsparing in his denunciation of Lincoln as an atheist, aristocrat, and duelist. Practically all the reputation of atheism that ever clung to Lincoln was due to this political campaign. The charge of aristocracy arose from the social connections of Mrs. Lincoln. Lincoln ignored the first charge and answered the others with only good humor.

During this campaign Lincoln was attending a religious meeting where Cartwright was preaching. At the close of the meeting the aggressive minister called upon all those who wished to give their hearts to God and go to heaven to stand up. Many, but not all, arose. Then the preacher invited all who did not wish to go to hell to stand up. Everybody stood except Lincoln. The preacher then observed in tones of gravest condemnation that Mr. Lincoln had not responded to either invitation and had refused to indicate a desire either to go to heaven or not to go to hell. Addressing him directly, he said, "May I inquire of you, Mr. Lincoln, where you are going?" Abraham drew himself up gradually to his full height and said very slowly and distinctly:

> I came here as a respectful listener. I did not know that I was to be singled out by Brother Cartwright. I believe in treating religious matters with due solemnity. I admit that the questions propounded by Brother Cartwright are of great importance. I did not feel called upon to answer as the rest did. Brother Cartwright asks me directly where I am going. I desire to reply with equal directness: "I am going to Congress."

Abe was elected by an overwhelming majority, but served only one term in the lower house of Congress.

Peter Cartwright, Methodist circuit-riding preacher (1785 to 1872). From a daguerreotype presented by Mrs. B. C. Keene to the Historical Society of Bloomington, Illinois.

The fact has never been positively proved, but there is ample evidence for the belief that the three men — Hardin, Baker, and Lincoln — formed an agreement, which ran through four or six years, whereby each of them was to serve one term in Con-

gress; and each of them did. There was nothing corrupt in this agreement. It was practical politics.

Abe's record in Congress was about like that of any member of the lower house for a first term. He did not make much of a showing, and what little he really did make caused him to give explanations for the rest of his political career. His own statement of this record in his autobiography of 1860 reads a good deal like an apology, or a defense:

> In 1846 he was elected to the lower house of Congress, and served one term only, commencing in December, 1847, and ending with the inauguration of General Taylor in March, 1849. All the battles of the Mexican War had been fought before Mr. Lincoln took his seat in Congress, but the American army was still in Mexico, and the treaty of peace was not fully and formally ratified till the June afterward. Much has been said of his course in Congress in regard to this war. A careful examination of the *Journal* and *Congressional Globe* shows that he voted for all the supply measures that came up, and for all the measures in any way favorable to the officers, soldiers, and their families, who conducted the war through: with the exception that some of these measures passed without yeas and nays, leaving no record as to how particular men voted. The *Journal* and *Globe* also show him voting that the war was unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President of the United States. This is the language of Mr. Ashmun's amendment, for which Mr. Lincoln and nearly or quite all other Whigs of the House of Representatives voted.
>
> Mr. Lincoln's reasons for the opinion expressed by this vote were briefly that the President had sent General Taylor into an inhabited part of the country belonging to Mexico, and not to the United States, and thereby had provoked the first act of hostility, in fact the commence-

ment of the war; that the place, being the country bordering on the east bank of the Rio Grande, was inhabited by native Mexicans, born there under the Mexican Government, and had never submitted to, nor been conquered by, Texas or the United States, nor transferred to either by treaty; that although Texas claimed the Rio Grande as her boundary, Mexico had never recognized it, and neither Texas nor the United States had ever enforced it; that there was a broad desert between that and the country over which Texas had actual control; that the country where hostilities commenced, having once belonged to Mexico, must remain so until it was somehow legally transferred, which had never been done.

Mr. Lincoln thought the act of sending an armed force among the Mexicans was unnecessary, inasmuch as Mexico was in no way molesting or menacing the United States or the people thereof; and that it was unconstitutional, because the power of levying war is vested in Congress, and not in the President. He thought the principal motive for the act was to divert public attention from the surrender of "Fifty-four, forty, or fight" to Great Britain, on the Oregon boundary question.

Mr. Lincoln was not a candidate for reëlection. This was determined upon and declared before he went to Washington, in accordance with an understanding among Whig friends, by which Colonel Hardin and Colonel Baker had each previously served a single term in this same district.

Abe was probably right about the Mexican War as history now views it, but it was not very good politics to take the critical attitude that he took along with the rest of the Whigs, immediately after the war. His friends back home wrote him that he had ruined his political career forever, and he evidently felt very much the same way about it after his return.

However, this short term of service gave him an understanding of Washington and a contact with national affairs that he could not have got so advantageously in any other way. He was lonesome in Washington during the time that Mary and the children were away, and spent most of his spare time bowling. It was a popular sport in the national capital at that time. Abe was a very awkward bowler, but he could slam the big balls down the alleys with great force.

He was on the floor of the house when John Quincy Adams, the "old man eloquent," eighty-two years of age, collapsed in his seat and sank lifeless to the floor just after he had loudly voted, "No," on a special resolution of thanks to certain officers of the Mexican War. Abe had voted the same way. He was on the committee of arrangements for Adams's funeral.

Although the Whigs roundly denounced the Mexican War, they took its greatest military hero, Zachary Taylor, as their candidate for President in 1848. Abe worked for him vigorously and deserted his idol, Henry Clay, to do so. It was a matter of expediency. He said that "Clay's chance of election was just no chance at all." He thought that "Old Rough and Ready" would be a popular candidate, which proved to be the fact. He said "all the odds and ends are with us — Barnburners, native Americans, Tyler men, disappointed office-seekers, Locofocos, and the Lord knows what. This is important, if in nothing else, in showing which way the wind blows." The only speeches of any particular note which Abe made in Congress were for the direct

purpose of serving as campaign arguments in the election. He says in his autobiography:

> In 1848, during his term in Congress, he advocated General Taylor's nomination for the presidency, in opposition to all others, and also took an active part for his election after his nomination, speaking a few times in Massachusetts, and canvassing quite fully his own district in Illinois, which was followed by a majority in the district of over 1500 for General Taylor.

Although Abe did not take any pronounced stand on slavery while in Congress, he did introduce a bill to prohibit it in the District of Columbia. This bill provided for a vote of the people of the District upon the question and also made provision for the return of fugitive slaves who escaped into the District. His efforts did not meet with much favor on the part of either the slaveholders or abolitionists.

He also expressed himself indirectly as to slavery in the fight on the Wilmot Proviso, which came up in several different forms throughout the session. It proposed to prohibit slavery in the territory acquired as the result of the Mexican War. Lincoln said he voted in favor of this resolution in one form or another about forty times, but it was never adopted.

There is no doubt that Lincoln tried to play politics according to the best rules of the game in those early Illinois days. Frequently opposing candidates and campaign speakers of opposing parties went about together. After Lincoln became great, the Honorable William L. D. Ewing, a Democrat who traveled with him in one campaign as a friendly opponent, loved to tell this story of how Abe got the

better of him. They went together to the home of a prominent farmer in the neighborhood, and in his absence each of them tried to make a favorable impression upon their hostess. When milking time came and the farmer's wife took up the milking pail, Mr. Ewing, with ready courtesy, took it out of her hand and went in front of her out to the barnyard, where he insisted upon doing the milking himself. He lost all the benefit of this masterly gesture, for while he had his head down milking and at the same time loudly talking to the hostess, who he thought was just behind him, Abraham succeeded in detaching the lady and was engaging her in animated conversation some distance away. Abe won the support of the lady, while Ewing milked the cow.

In another campaign Abe, being too poor to possess a carriage or even an ordinary buggy, rode about a good deal in the carriage of his friendly opponent, Mr. Weir, with whom he had some debates. In the course of one debate Abe took occasion to praise the generosity of his opponent:

> I am too poor to own a carriage, but my friend has generously invited me to ride with him. I want you to vote for me if you will; then if not, vote for my opponent, for he is a fine man.

A prominent Democrat by the name of Colonel Dick Taylor, who was known as "ruffled-shirt Taylor," condemned with considerable bitterness what he called "Whig elegance." Just as Taylor reached the climax of one of his speeches along this line, Abe, who was immediately behind him, gave his close-buttoned coat a sudden jerk which tore it open,

disclosing a gorgeously ruffled shirt, velvet vest, and huge gold chain from which dangled many rings and seals. This completely "scotched" Colonel Taylor's arguments about Whig extravagance.

In one long-remembered debate at Springfield, in which Abe made a very impressive speech, he was vigorously attacked by his opponent, George Forquer, who had a great reputation as an orator and was especially noted for his effective use of sarcasm. Forquer had recently changed his politics and as a result had been appointed registrar of the land office. Shortly after receiving this appointment he had placed over his house a showy lightning rod — the only lightning rod in that whole vicinity. Forquer made a typical "slasher-gaff" speech in which he said that "this young man Lincoln would have to be taken down, and he was sorry that the task devolved upon him." Lincoln made a killing reply, in which he said:

> The gentleman commenced his speech by saying that this young man would have to be taken down, and he was sorry the task devolved upon him. I am not so young in years as I am in the tricks and trade of a politician; but live long or die young, I would rather die now than, like the gentleman, change my politics and simultaneous with the change receive an office worth three thousand dollars a year, and then have to erect a lightning rod over my house to protect a guilty conscience from an offended God.

The following letter, written when Lincoln was twenty-seven, shows his frank and open political methods. He was then a candidate for reëlection to the legislature, having previously served one term of two years.

NEW SALEM, *June* 21, 1836

DEAR COLONEL — I am told that during my absence last week you passed through this place and stated publicly that you were in possession of a fact, or facts, which, if known to the public, would entirely destroy the prospects of N. W. Edwards and myself at the ensuing election; but that, through favor to us, you would forbear to divulge them. No one has needed favors more than I, and, generally, few have been less unwilling to accept them; but in this case, favor to me would be injustice to the public, and, therefore, I must beg your pardon for declining it. That I once had the confidence of the people of Sangamon county is sufficiently evident, and if I have since done any thing, either by design or misadventure, which, if known, would subject me to a forfeiture of that confidence, he that knows of that thing and conceals it is a traitor to his country's interest.

I find myself wholly unable to form any conjecture of what fact, or facts, real or supposed, you spoke. But my opinion of your veracity will not permit me, for a moment, to doubt that you, at least, believed what you said. I am flattered with the personal regard you manifested for me; but I hope that on more mature reflection you will view the public interest as a paramount consideration, and therefore determine to let the worst come.

I here assure you that the candid statement of facts on your part, however low it may sink me, shall never break the ties of personal friendship between us.

I wish an answer to this, and you are at liberty to publish both, if you choose.

Very respectfully,

A. LINCOLN

COL. ROBERT ALLEN

There was no answer.

Lincoln always encouraged young men to enter politics, and he made a significant expression on this

subject once in a letter to his young friend and partner, Herndon, who complained that older men prevented his advancement:

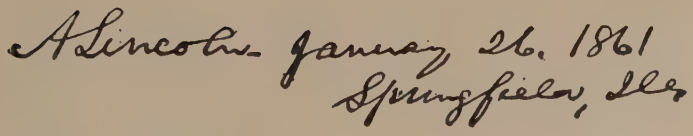
> Do you suppose that I should ever have got into notice if I had waited to be hunted up and pushed forward by older men? The way for a young man to rise is to improve himself every way he can, never suspecting that anybody wishes to hinder him. Allow me to assure you that suspicion and jealousy never did help any man in any situation. There may sometimes be ungenerous attempts to keep a young man down; and they will succeed, too, if he allows his mind to be diverted from its true channel to brood over the attempted injury. Cast about, and see if this feeling has not injured every person you have ever known to fall into it.

When Abraham Lincoln returned home from Washington after serving a single term in Congress, his friends plainly told him that he was returning to oblivion politically, and he thought so himself. He was less popular at that time than at any other period of his entire political career. His former law partner, Judge Logan, was defeated as the candidate for Congress in Lincoln's place on the Whig ticket, running on Lincoln's record. Things looked gloomy for Abe. He was out of office, out of money, and for the time being out of the law practice. He tried to get a political appointment, to which he was entitled after his campaign for "Old Rough and Ready," as Taylor was known. He wanted to be commissioner of the land office. He not only failed in this, but at the same time lost some very valuable friendships because of the angling over the appointments of the new administration. He was finally offered the governorship of

the new territory of Oregon, which he refused. His wife, Mary, would not let him accept it. She did not want to leave the society of Springfield for a frontier post, and she believed there was something better for him. She rendered Abe a great service by preventing him from being sidetracked in this way.

There was nothing for him to do but take up the law practice again; so, as his autobiography reads,

> Upon his return from Congress, he went to the practice of the law with greater earnestness than ever before. In 1852 he was upon the Scott electoral ticket, and did something in the way of canvassing, but owing to the hopelessness of the cause in Illinois he did less than in previous presidential canvasses.
>
> In 1854 his profession had almost superseded the thought of politics in his mind, when the repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused him as he had never been before.



CHAPTER TEN

LAWYER

LINCOLN, at twenty-three, reasoned in this way:

He studied what he should do, thought of learning the blacksmith trade — thought of trying to study law — rather thought he could not succeed at that without better education.

There were many reasons why the trade of a blacksmith might have appealed to Abe. He had a mechanical bent; he had strong arms and big hands. He would have made a prime blacksmith. But Abe's doubts as to whether he should be a blacksmith or a lawyer were interrupted for several years by his duties as storekeeper, postmaster, surveyor, and politician. And his political success finally guided him into the law. He says of this step in his life:

The election of 1834 came, and he was then elected to the legislature by the highest vote cast for any candidate. Major John T. Stuart, then in full practice of the law, was also elected. During the canvass, in a private conversation, he encouraged Abraham to study law. After the election he borrowed books of Stuart, took them home with him, and went at it in good earnest. He studied with nobody. He still mixed in the surveying to pay board and clothing bills. When the legislature met, the law books were dropped, but were taken up again at the end of the session. He was reëlected in 1836, 1838, and 1840. In the autumn of 1836 he obtained a law license, and on April 15, 1837, removed to Springfield, and commenced the practice — his old friend Stuart taking him into partnership.

So Honest Abe became a lawyer, and a good one. He kept up a shingle in Springfield to the end of his

life. He was a member of three different firms and occupied three different offices. The first was that of Stuart and Lincoln, from 1837–1841; the next was that of Logan and Lincoln, 1841–1844; the third was that of Lincoln and Herndon, lasting from 1844 to 1865.

We do not know just how thorough Abe's study of the law had been up to the time he began practicing, but he was no doubt well grounded in the basic principles. Back in his early Hoosier days he had studied the *Revised Statutes of Indiana*, and witnessed trials at Boonville, Rockport, and Princeton with keen interest. During his idle storekeeping days he had read with much absorption *Blackstone's Commentaries* and pondered upon them deeply. In fact, Abe had done a good deal of deep reading of the law, and it is probable that notwithstanding his limited education he was fairly well qualified to begin practice in 1837. His success in politics and his service in the legislature had given him a wide acquaintance as well as great popularity in Springfield before he ever came to that town. Springfield welcomed him as "one of nature's noblemen" for having championed its cause in the legislative fight which had just brought the state capital to that ambitious town. But notwithstanding all this, Abe's arrival in Springfield in April, 1837, could hardly be called impressive.

He rode into town on a borrowed horse, with all his possessions in a pair of saddlebags, and went to Joshua Speed's store to buy the furnishings for a bed. He intended to rent a room as cheaply as possible and furnish it himself. When he found that the

cost of furnishings amounted to seventeen dollars, he said he was unable to buy. He thought if he could have credit until Christmas he could pay for it, "if his experiment as a lawyer was a success." He said, "If I fail in this, I don't know that I can ever pay you." The kind-hearted Speed was touched. He said he never saw a sadder face than Lincoln's was at that moment, and he suggested to him that he might share a large room and a double bed with him upstairs. Abe carried the saddlebags up the narrow stairway. He quickly returned and, with a beaming countenance, exclaimed, "Well, Speed, I've moved." This was the beginning of one of Lincoln's finest friendships. It was the beginning of his residence as a lawyer in the state capital of Illinois.

Brief mention should be made here of Lincoln's law partners. Stuart was one of the ablest trial lawyers in the state and he was a leading politician. He served in Congress during most of the time Lincoln was associated with him. No doubt the fact that both members of this firm were taking such an active interest in politics made of it an unsuccessful partnership. The same thing was true in a large measure of his second partnership — that with Judge Stephen T. Logan, a very high-grade lawyer and a man with much experience on the bench. Lincoln derived great benefit both as lawyer and politician from his association with both these men. His last partnership, with William H. Herndon, which continued for twenty-one years, from 1844 to Lincoln's death, was his most important connection. Herndon was much younger than Lincoln. He was an admirer,

almost a worshiper of Lincoln, from early boyhood throughout the remainder of his life. As a boy of twelve, running along the bank of the Sangamon, he first saw Abe in the character of a skillful navigator, piloting the *Talisman* from Beardstown to Springfield in 1832. Although a very brilliant man, he was quite erratic in many ways and did more to advance Lincoln than to advance himself. When Lincoln left this law office for the White House, he told Herndon to keep the sign of Lincoln and Herndon hanging.

Abe was not much of an office lawyer, and he kept a shabby office. He was most at home in court, in the actual trial of cases. When not trying cases, he preferred to be on the street or in some congenial group of people.

During his early years of practice Abe spent much time in the office of the *Sangamo Journal*. He did a great deal of reading, but he did not confine his reading and study to the law. He read widely and generally in politics, literature, philosophy, and science; he even studied mathematics. Along with his political speaking, he did a good deal of lecturing on various academic subjects, as well as upon politics and government. He had a notable lecture on inventions.

His most successful period of law practice was after his return from Congress in 1849. He had no money and no political prospects — so "he went to the practice of law with a greater earnestness than ever before" and for the next five years devoted himself diligently to it. In fact, until he was aroused over the slavery agitation in 1854, he had almost

succeeded in getting out of his mind everything but the practice of law.

He was almost constantly riding the circuit during this period. The area of his practice covered the entire Eighth Judicial Circuit, which contained fifteen counties and covered a territory of about 150 square miles. There were no railroads; so the judge and the lawyers traveled from court to court on horseback or in spring wagons or carriages. Much of this time Abe rode a borrowed horse or hired a seat in a three-seated spring wagon. During the last part of this period of practice he owned a poky horse named Old Buck, and a rattling buggy, which he kept in a very ordinary barn on the rear of his lot. He curried and fed the horse himself, and in addition milked the cow, which was allowed to run at large; he also cut and carried the wood for his household use.

But he was away from home a great deal, sometimes for a period of from three to six months at a time. He enjoyed the work in court, where he was almost constantly trying cases, and he enjoyed equally well his social hours with his fellow attorneys and the judge at the little old taverns where they had to stop; although his close associates noted that even in those days he was often subject to moods of the darkest melancholy. He probably did more to cultivate his peculiar social habits and particularly the habit of story telling during this circuit experience than at any other time in his life.

Abe's stories were a great diversion for the lawyers and judges around the tavern stove. It has been a

subject of some wonder as to why more of Lincoln's stories have not been preserved in print and why they do not reflect in print the striking interest and overwhelming humor for which they were famed among those who heard them. There is a very good reason for this. His stories were unique and peculiar to himself. The mannerisms that accompanied the telling were really more impressive than the words. He repeated stories that he had heard, and gave them a new meaning; but he also concocted his own stories, drawing illustrations from his own widely diversified experiences. His illustrations were fresh and wholesome and of a somewhat uncouth nature, primarily suited to the rough-and-ready atmosphere of a group of men rather than to the banquet table or the funny pages of a literary magazine. He often used conundrums to illustrate a point. One of his favorites was: "Calling a dog's tail a leg, how many legs has he?"

Stories of the kind that Lincoln used are told either to entertain or to illustrate a point; they frequently do both, when told by a skillful narrator. Abe's stories usually did both, but ordinarily the point of his story was for particular application in a group of men. It is significant that he got his main idea as to the purpose of story telling from Æsop's fables and the parables of the Bible. Dennis Hanks once explained Lincoln's attitude toward his anecdotes: "I asked him onct," said Dennis, "after he'd gone to lawin' and could make a jury laugh or cry by firin' a yarn at 'em, 'Abe, whar did you git so blamed many lies?' An' he'd always say, 'Denny, when a story l'arns you a good lesson, it ain't no lie. God tells

truths in parables. They're easier fur common folks to understand an' ricollect.' His stories were like that."

He applied this theory in telling stories containing the simplest humor or the most serious philosophy. Arguing for the adoption by the Whigs of the convention system in nominating candidates, he said:

> That "union is strength" is a truth that has been known in all ages of the world. That great fabulist and philosopher, Æsop, illustrated it by his fable of the bundle of sticks; and He whose wisdom surpasses that of all philosophers has declared that "a house divided against itself cannot stand."

He used stories and illustrations of this kind very effectively in his arguments to juries. They pleased the jury and made his contentions so plain and interesting that they helped to win verdicts. For example, Abe once defended a man who, when he had been insulted and attacked by another, had first endured the insult, but later resisted so vigorously as to administer to his assailant a terrible thrashing, for which he was tried on a charge of assault and battery. It was proved that he had done his assailant more damage than was necessary for his own defense. Abe told the story of a farmer who, while going along the highway with a pitchfork on his shoulder, was attacked by a ferocious dog. To defend himself, the farmer ran the fork into the dog and killed him.

> "What made you kill my dog?" said the owner.
> "What made him try to bite me?"

"But why did you not go at him with the other end of the pitchfork?"

"Why did he not come after me with his other end?"

Members of the jury remembered long after Lincoln became President the indescribably funny appearance he made, when he reached the climax of this story, by whirling about in front of them with his long arms extended, as if pushing a dog with its tail toward them. They got the point, and Abe won the case.

Again, he defended a man whose stock had broken into a neighbor's field and done great damage to his crops. There was no question about the damage, but Abe made a strong point about the plaintiff's miserable fences, which had let the stock through. He said they reminded him of a story about a fence that was so crooked that when a hog went through an opening in it, he always came out on the same side from which he started. He illustrated the confusion of the hog, going through the fence again and again and always finding himself back on the side from which he started. And he depicted for the jury the perplexed expression of the hog's countenance at his dilemma. The result was that he made the plaintiff's case so ridiculous that the defendant won.

Most of the cases were peculiar to the pioneer conditions of that day. They involved the simple problems of the frontier — boundary disputes, damages caused by stock running at large, boisterous riots, occasional feuds and disturbances, suits upon small contracts, and now and then criminal cases, such as assault or murder. Corporation business

gradually developed with the spread of railroads and the settlement of the country. All of Lincoln's experiences went into his understanding and trial of these cases. His farming, flatboating, storekeeping, surveying, and, most of all, his vast knowledge of human nature really gave him an invaluable background for understanding and handling the issue of fact involved in the trial of every case. Abe was particularly expert in cases that involved surveying.

He always tried to reduce the law involved to very first principles, making it as simple as possible. He could appeal to the jury better than to the court, and in most of these proceedings the jury was the all-important factor. He "just talked to the jury" in a plain and practical way and in terms that they could not help understanding. He drew upon their good humor with his anecdotes, and knew how to appeal to their sympathies. He rested his case always upon the main point and sacrificed everything else to establish the importance and clearness of that main point. Right here it may be stated that there are two widely differing methods of giving emphasis in a law case. There is that of the fighting lawyer who fights every inch of the way and every step of the proceedings. This method has some practical merit: it gives the lawyer the reputation of being a fighter. The sheer force of this characteristic encourages some clients and sometimes brings victories. But Lincoln belonged to the opposite school. He yielded readily every minor point, but stood firm as a rock upon the one thing that he considered decisive.

His method of handling witnesses was peculiarly

effective. He invariably got the good will of a witness by his fair and simple method of questioning. If the witness was timid and backward, he drew him out by his kind sympathy and helpfulness. If the witness was hostile, he usually disarmed him by quizzical good humor; and if the witness was disposed to hold back or controvert the truth, Abe pursued him so relentlessly, though quietly, that he left no loophole for escape. The truth came out. He never tried to "outsmart" or browbeat a witness. He won the good will and confidence of his fellow lawyers and the judge by his frankness and honesty. Lawyers and judges appreciate more than do most laymen the value of rigid honesty in a trial; a strictly honest lawyer is a great aid to the court, and the judge will inevitably be prejudiced in his favor. It was a common expression that opposing lawyers were "afraid of Lincoln's honesty."

No one knew Lincoln as a lawyer better than did Judge David Davis, who presided over the entire circuit of the Eighth Judicial District during much of Lincoln's life as a lawyer. Justice Davis said of him:

> He seized the strong points of a case and presented them with clearness and great compactness. His mind was logical and direct, and he did not indulge in superfluous discussion. An unfailing fund of humor never deserted him, and he was able to claim the attention of court and jury, when the cause was most uninteresting, by the appropriateness of his anecdotes. The framework of his mental and moral being was honesty, and a wrong cause was poorly defended by him.

Lincoln could not try a case with spirit or force unless he himself believed it was right, or at least

worthy of fair and thorough presentation. He had a client once who "proved an account" on which Abe brought suit for him. But in the course of the trial it developed that Abe's client was a very slippery fellow. Abe became convinced of this before the trial was over. Receipts were introduced proving clearly that the entire account had been fully settled.

Illinois State Historical Library

Judge David Davis.

When judgment was to be rendered, Abe was absent; and the judge sent for him at the hotel. He told the messenger to say to the judge, "I can't come; my hands are dirty, and I came over to clean them."

A few of his many cases have lived in the story of his life because they illustrate phases of his character and features of his career. Some of these have no special importance except to reveal some peculiar

angle of Lincoln's mind. Once when defending some women who had been indicted upon a perfectly truthful charge of having knocked in the head of a whisky barrel and spilled its contents, Abe made a vigorous defense, culminating in a speech against the evils of the liquor traffic and insisting that the indictment should have read the "State versus Mr. Whisky," rather than have represented the state as against the women.

Lincoln loved to try cases which involved some great principle of morality or patriotism. He never appeared better, perhaps, than in a very modest case in which he represented the widow of a Revolutionary soldier who sued a pension agent because he had charged her a fee amounting to half the pension he had helped her obtain. The rough notes which Lincoln made for his argument in this case were as follows:

No contract — not professional services. — Unreasonable charge, — money retained by Def't not given by Pl'ff. — Revolutionary War. — Soldier's bleeding feet. — Pl'ff's husband. — Soldier leaving home for army. — Skin Def't. — Close.

Abe evidently followed this outline. He reviewed the Revolutionary War, depicted the sufferings of Valley Forge and the hardships and privations of the family in the soldier's absence, after which he reached a grand climax by skinning the defendant with merciless invective because he had overcharged a Revolutionary widow.

Abe had several cases that touched upon slavery. The most noted of these was one dealing with the right to freedom of a negro girl named Nance. She

had been brought to Illinois from the South by her former owner. After several years' residence in Illinois this owner sold her to a man by the name of Baily, on condition that she was to be paid for only when Baily received title papers showing that he had a right to hold her as a slave in Illinois. Baily never received the papers and never paid for Nance. Later he was sued for the conditional purchase price by the heirs of the former slave owner, who procured a judgment in the lower court. Lincoln defended Baily and made a powerful argument before the supreme court of the state. He showed that Nance was over twenty-one years of age. She had resided several years in the state, had declared herself to be free, and had conducted business in her own name. He covered the whole subject of slavery from the standpoint of the laws of Illinois, relying on the Ordinance of 1787, which prohibited slavery anywhere in the Northwest Territory. He used the Constitution of Illinois, by which the state was admitted free in 1818, and he argued the fundamental principle that no person can be sold in a free state. He won the case, and from that time on Nance was unquestionably free. This case established a precedent on the question of owning slaves in Illinois.

An account of a case in which Abe played the part of champion of the Thespian art was given by the great actor, Joseph Jefferson, in his autobiography. Young Jefferson, a boy of ten, was traveling with his father's theatrical company in 1839, when the company built a theater in Springfield and played there through the season. But as the result of a

religious revival the theater was attacked by the church people and a heavy license tax was imposed by the city. Jefferson reported the case as follows:

> In the midst of our trouble a young lawyer called on the managers. He had heard of the injustice, and offered, if they would place the matter in his hands, to have the license taken off, declaring that he only desired to see fair play, and he would accept no fee whether he failed or succeeded. The young lawyer began his harangue. He handled the subject with tact, skill, and humor, tracing the history of the drama from the time when Thespis acted in a cart to the stage of today. He illustrated his speech with a number of anecdotes, and kept the council in a roar of laughter. His good humor prevailed, and the exorbitant tax was taken off.

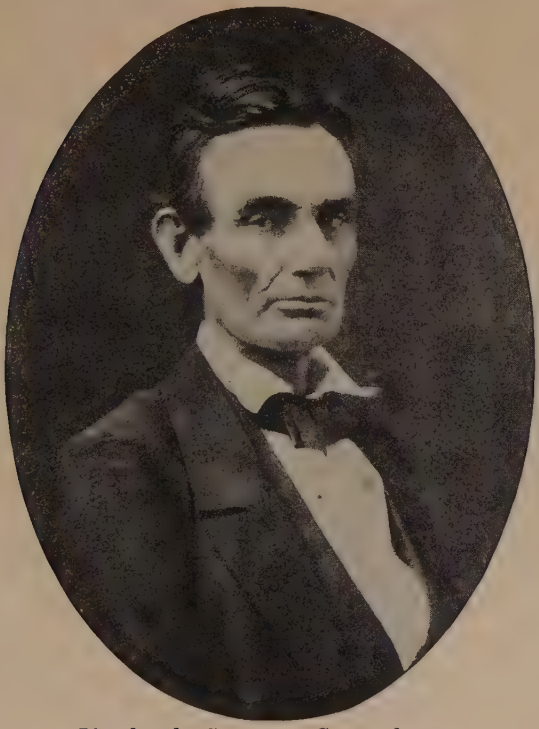
Lincoln loved shows all his life, and he attended them whenever he had an opportunity. He liked to go alone, and he often went to the same show several times in succession. He was particularly fond of minstrel shows. Lincoln first heard "Dixie" sung in a minstrel show in Chicago in 1860 and loved this Southern song from that time forth. His last hour of consciousness was spent enjoying a light comedy. It was the irony of fate that he met his death at the hands of a famous actor — a member of the profession he had so warmly supported.

Lincoln's skillful treatment of witnesses is illustrated by the following story. He was once defending a young man by the name of Peachy Harrison, charged with the murder of Greek Crafton, who had been a student in Lincoln's office. Both these young men belonged to fine families, and the brother of one was married to a sister of the other.

Although they had always been friends, they became involved in a hot political quarrel, in the course of which a fight arose. In a moment of anger Harrison stabbed Crafton with a knife, causing his death three days later. The case aroused great interest, and several prominent lawyers were employed on both sides. One of the main witnesses for the defense was Lincoln's old political antagonist, the Reverend Peter Cartwright, at this time an old, gray-haired man and the grandfather of the defendant. Cartwright had spent a long and stormy life as a relentless fighter against wrong of every kind, and he was loved by the entire community. It was Lincoln who questioned him on the witness stand, and he did it with the most tender gentleness. He had Cartwright tell in his deep, solemn voice how he had held the defendant as a babe, laughing and crying on his knee. He had him tell also how the dying lad had said to him almost in the hour of death, "I am dying; I will soon part with all I love on earth and I want you to say to my slayer that I forgive him. I want to leave this earth with the forgiveness of all who have in any way injured me." The old minister's testimony, brought out so skillfully by Lincoln, was made the principal basis of the defense. And upon it Lincoln made a touching argument, appealing to the jury for the same spirit of forgiveness that the murdered man had shown. Harrison was acquitted.

There is no case for which Lincoln is better known than the famous Almanac Case — the defense of Duff Armstrong. Duff was the son of Jack Armstrong, Lincoln's old wrestling antagonist, who died

just before his son was brought to trial, charged with the murder of a young man by the name of Metzker



Lincoln, the Sangamon County lawyer.

in a drunken row in which several had participated. Jack Armstrong's last request to his wife, Hannah, was to sell everything and clear Duff; so the sorrowing Hannah came to their old friend, Abe. The trial took place at Beardstown in May, 1858, at a time when Lincoln was deeply engaged in both law and politics. His campaign for the senate against Stephen A. Douglas was just being launched, but he

dropped everything and devoted himself to the defense of the son of his old friends, Jack and Hannah. A man by the name of Norris had already been convicted for having struck Metzker with an ox yoke in the course of the fight. Metzker had two wounds, either of which might have killed him. One of them was undoubtedly dealt by Norris with the ox yoke, and there was strong evidence that the other had been dealt by Duff Armstrong.

The fight had occurred late at night, sometime before midnight; one witness testified positively that he had seen Armstrong strike Metzker with a slung shot. He asserted that he could see clearly because the moon was shining brightly. Abe questioned him closely and had him repeat positively several times that he was able to see the blow because of the bright moonshine. This was in August, 1857. Abe then introduced an almanac, which he placed in the hands of judge and jury, showing that although there was a moon at that time, it was too low and dim at that hour to have furnished light as the witness testified. Abe argued the case upon this part of the testimony, insisting that since the witness was false, or at least wrong, on that point, none of his testimony could be relied upon. He also made a touching personal appeal, describing graphically to the jury the warm friendship which he had enjoyed as a homeless youth in the home of Jack and Hannah Armstrong, where he had often rocked the cradle of the defendant. As the case closed and before the verdict was rendered, Abe said to the mother, "Aunt Hannah, your son will be free before sundown." Lincoln had taken

pains to procure mostly young men on the jury, and Duff Armstrong was acquitted. Lincoln refused to accept any pay for his services, saying he had given them for the sake of old-time friendship.

In 1855 he was employed to represent the Illinois Central Railroad. He won a very important case for the road against McLean County, for which he presented a bill of two thousand dollars. When he made this charge at the Chicago office, an impertinent official there said, "Why, this is as much as a first-class lawyer would have charged." Abe was angered by this contemptuous treatment. He obtained signed statements from leading lawyers of the state testifying that for the service he had rendered a charge of five thousand dollars would be a moderate fee. Abe sued the railroad company for five thousand dollars and collected it. In this service for the railroad he first made the acquaintance of George B. McClellan, who was later to play such an important part in the history of the presidency of Lincoln. General McClellan wrote in his book, *McClellan's Own Story*, the following account of this early acquaintanceship:

> Long before the war, when vice president of the Illinois Central Railroad, I knew Mr. Lincoln, for he was one of the counsel of the company. More than once I have been with him in out-of-the-way county seats where some important case was being tried, and, in the lack of sleeping accommodations, have spent the night in front of a stove, listening to the unceasing flow of anecdotes from his lips. He was never at a loss, and I could never quite make up my mind how many of them he had really heard before, and how many he invented on the spur of the moment. His stories were seldom refined, but were always to the point.

Lincoln was employed in a famous case which was tried in Cincinnati in 1855. It was known as the McCormick Case and was a trial over reaping-machine patents. Edwin M. Stanton, whose chief claim to fame is that he was the great Secretary of War in the Cabinet of President Lincoln, was an attorney in this case on the same side as Lincoln. Stanton was then a famous lawyer, and it seems that he, as well as the other "big city lawyers" in the case, looked down upon this country lawyer of the West. At any rate, when the case finally came to trial, the arguments were limited to two on a side and Abe was not allowed to participate. He felt embittered over this, for he had very carefully prepared a complete written argument. However, he sat through the trial with keen interest. He was impressed with Stanton's masterly argument, which closed the case. When the trial was over, Lincoln exclaimed with great fervor to a companion whom he had asked to take a walk with him, "I am going home to study law." His companion expressed surprise at this and said that Lincoln was already at the head of the bar of Illinois. Abe continued:

> Ah, yes, I do occupy a good position there, and I think that I can get along with the way things are done there now. But these college-trained men who have devoted their whole lives to study are coming West; don't you see? And they study their cases as we never do. They have got as far as Cincinnati now. They will soon be in Illinois. I am going home to study law! I am as good as any of them, and when they get to Illinois I will be ready for them!

Abe was never a money maker. His income between 1850 and 1860 averaged from two to three

thousand dollars a year. This was the period of his greatest activity in law. Prior to that time the largest known earnings of Lincoln and Herndon for a single year was a total of fifteen hundred dollars, in 1847. Nearly all the fees of that year were small, the largest single fee being for one hundred dollars. Lincoln's largest fees were the five thousand dollars from the railroad and the two thousand dollars for the McCormick Case. In the matter of charging a fee, Lincoln was at variance with all his fellow members of the bar. They declared he would ruin the practice by his low charges; and he was once tried and convicted in a kangaroo court of lawyers for this practice. But Abe never departed from it. He probably never owned more than ten thousand dollars.

Estimates of Lincoln as a lawyer range from declaring him to have been a really great lawyer to contending that he was a mere backwoods barrister. There is foundation for both these extremes. During a course of some twenty years' practice, which was broken in upon by several terms in the legislature, one term in Congress, and by constant activity in politics, he was engaged as a leading counsel in over one hundred cases before the Supreme Court of Illinois. No other attorney of the state had a better record covering that period. Although he was a great honor to the profession, he could hardly be called a good all-round example of a successful practitioner. He was unbusinesslike in his charges and collections, and unsystematic in his notes and records. In a Lincoln collection today there is a queer package, labeled in Abe's own handwriting,

"When you can't find it anywhere else, look into this." He was very irregular in his study and preparation of cases. When he had a particular problem in hand he mastered it, but he depended more upon memory than upon careful written analysis; and he relied upon fundamental principles of right and wrong rather than upon law books. He went to first principles in each case, rather than to precedents. He never forgot a simple statement which he heard fall from the lips of John C. Calhoun while he was in Congress: "Reliance upon precedent," said Calhoun, "is to make the error of yesterday the law of today."

He gave to young law students the following advice, which is preserved in the notes of a lecture of July 1, 1850:

> Discourage litigation. Persuade your neighbors to compromise whenever you can. Point out to them how the nominal winner is often a real loser — in fees, expenses, and waste of time. As a peacemaker the lawyer has a superior opportunity of being a good man. There will still be business enough.
>
> Never stir up litigation. A worse man can scarcely be found than one who does this. Who can be more nearly a fiend than he who habitually overhauls the register of deeds in search of defects in titles, whereon to stir up strife and put money in his pocket? A moral tone ought to be infused into the profession which should drive such men out of it.
>
> The matter of fees is important, far beyond the mere question of bread and butter involved. Properly attended to, fuller justice is done to both lawyer and client. An exorbitant fee should never be claimed. As a general rule never take your whole fee in advance, nor any more

than a small retainer. When fully paid beforehand, you are more than mortal if you can feel the same interest in the case as if something was still in prospect for you, as well as for your client. And when you lack interest in the case, the job will very likely lack skill and diligence in the performance. Settle the amount of fee and take a note in advance. Then you will feel that you are working for something, and you are sure to do your work faithfully and well. Never sell a fee note — at least not before the consideration service is performed. It leads to negligence and dishonesty — negligence by losing interest in the case, and dishonesty in refusing to refund when you have allowed the consideration to fail.

In this same lecture to law students he further said:

There is a vague popular belief that lawyers are necessarily dishonest. I say *vague*, because when we consider to what extent confidence and honors are reposed in and conferred upon lawyers by the people, it appears improbable that their impression of dishonesty is very distinct and vivid. Yet the impression is common, almost universal. Let no young man choosing the law for a calling for a moment yield to the popular belief. Resolve to be honest at all events; and if in your own judgment you cannot be an honest lawyer, resolve to be honest without being a lawyer. Choose some other occupation rather than one in the choosing of which you do, in advance, consent to be a knave.

Ralph Emerson, a promising law student, was often with Lincoln and had great confidence in him. While walking with Lincoln one evening after a very tiresome day in court, Emerson suddenly said: "Mr. Lincoln, I want to ask you a question. Is it possible for a man to practice law and always do by others as

he would be done by?" There was no answer. Lincoln walked along for a time in utter silence, then heaved a heavy sigh and began talking about something entirely off the question Speaking of this in after life, Emerson said, "I had my answer, and that walk turned the course of my life." Whether this incident has any real significance or not, it remains a fact that Abraham Lincoln practiced the golden rule while he practiced law in Illinois from early manhood until he became President.

Lincoln's profound respect for his country's laws was expressed in a speech before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield, Illinois, when he was twenty-six years old:

> Let every American, every lover of liberty, every well-wisher to his posterity swear by the blood of the Revolution never to violate in the least particular the laws of the country, and never to tolerate their violation by others. As the patriots of seventy-six did to the support of the Declaration of Independence, so to the support of the Constitution and laws let every American pledge his life, his property, and his sacred honor — let every man remember that to violate the law is to trample on the blood of his father, and to tear the charter of his own and his children's liberty. Let reverence for the laws be breathed by every American mother to the lisping babe that prattles on her lap; let it be taught in schools, in seminaries, and in colleges; let it be written in primers, spelling books, and in almanacs; let it be preached from the pulpit, proclaimed in legislative halls, and enforced in courts of justice. And, in short, let it become the political religion of the nation; and let the old and the young, the rich and the poor, the grave and the gay of all sexes and tongues and colors and conditions, sacrifice unceasingly upon its altars.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

LINCOLN VERSUS DOUGLAS

ABRAHAM LINCOLN and Stephen A. Douglas first met in 1834 at the state legislature in Vandalia, where Douglas was a lobbyist. At the next session these two men were fellow members. Neither of them at that time lived in Springfield, but both of them made the new capital their residence soon afterward. This was the beginning of a lifelong rivalry.

The physical contrast between these two men was striking. When they sat side by side, there was a difference of four inches in their heights; and when standing together, Abe towered fourteen inches above Steve, who was only five feet two. Douglas was handsome, with polished manners and graceful bearing. He had a lion-like head and a voice that was both powerful and musical. He possessed all the personal accomplishments that Lincoln lacked; and he was perfectly at home in any group, either of men or women — on the street or the platform, in barroom or mansion, in court or senate. He had a brilliant mind and a courageous spirit.

Although he sometimes called on Mary Todd, there seems never to have been a serious courtship. Some time later he was happily married to a charming Southern girl. She died while he was a member of the United States Senate. Four years later he married the most beautiful and accomplished woman of Washington, a reigning beauty of the day, almost twenty years younger than he.

Abe seemed to feel an instinctive dislike for Steve.

He said when he first saw him that he was about the "least person" he had ever met. Although not personal enemies, they could hardly have been called friends. They were in opposition from the time they first met until Lincoln became President.

Douglas was four years younger than Lincoln, but he came to fame much earlier. He was state's attorney at twenty-two, served in the legislature at twenty-five, was registrar of the land office at twenty-six, supreme court judge at twenty-eight, Congressman at thirty, United States Senator at thirty-four, and a hopeful aspirant for the presidency of the United States at the age of thirty-nine. The first notable political clash between him and Lincoln occurred in December, 1839, when a series of joint debates between Democrats and Whigs, with three men on a side, was held in Springfield. Lincoln and Douglas were the leaders of their respective sides, and Lincoln's closing speech was made a campaign document the following year. In this campaign Douglas was defeated for Congress by Lincoln's law partner, Stuart. In the national campaign of 1840 Douglas conducted the state campaign for the Democrats, and it was largely through his brilliant leadership that Van Buren carried Illinois. During these early years in Springfield Douglas had about the same influence with the leading Democratic paper, the *Illinois Republican*, as Lincoln had with the leading Whig paper, the *Sangamo Journal.*

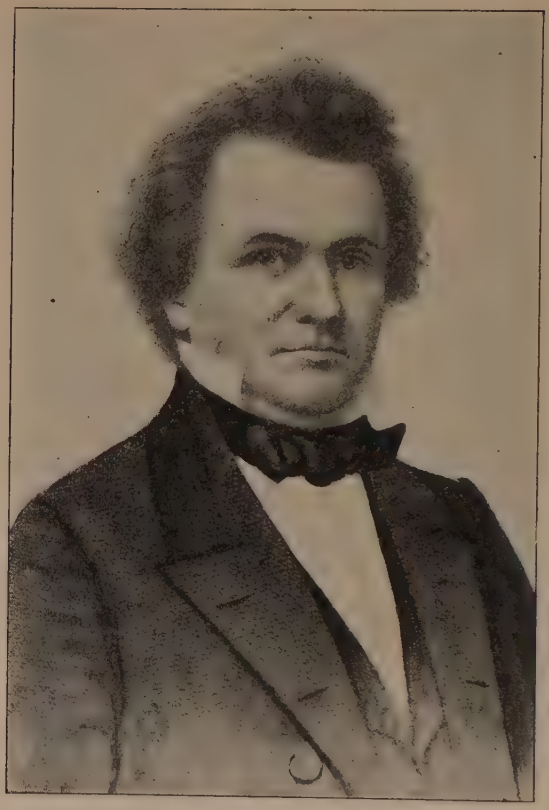
Douglas was elected to Congress in 1842 and served two terms before Lincoln got there. The year Lincoln was elected to the lower house of

Congress, Douglas was elected to the United States Senate. As a member of the Senate during those thrilling years from 1846 until his death in 1861, Douglas achieved almost unique leadership as a parliamentarian and debater. In the Senate chamber he met in debate the giants of that day — Seward, Chase, Everett, Sumner — and was easily the peer if not the acknowledged superior of them all. He became the leader of his party throughout the nation, and had a singularly devoted personal following, particularly throughout the Middle West. He was a formidable candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in both 1852 and 1856. He was popularly known as the "Little Giant."

The following description of him as he appeared on the floor of the Senate was given by Harriet Beecher Stowe:

> This Douglas is the very ideal of vitality. Short, broad, thick-set, every inch of him has its own alertness and motion. He has a good head, thick black hair, heavy black brows, and a keen face. His figure would be an unfortunate one were it not for the animation that constantly pervades it. As it is, it rather gives poignancy to his peculiar appearance; he has a small hand and a forcible mode of using it. . . . He has two requisites of a debater, a melodious voice and clear, sharply defined enunciation. His forte in debating is his power of mystifying the point.

In 1854 Douglas had the Senate chairmanship of the important Committee on Territories, and he brought forward the measure known in history as the Kansas-Nebraska Act. It repealed the Missouri Compromise in explicit terms and left all the



Stephen A. Douglas. Engraving from a daguerreotype.

territories to decide the question of slavery for themselves, on the principle of what later became known as "squatter sovereignty." This was done to appease the clamor of slaveholding interests of the South. More new territory was opening north of the Mason and Dixon Line than south of it. After a senatorial fight that has had few parallels

Douglas carried this measure through to success, and it became a law. It was popular in the South, but was most vigorously condemned everywhere in the North. Douglas was roundly denounced as a traitor, a Judas Iscariot. He was actually presented with "thirty pieces of silver" by a woman's organization in Ohio. When he left Washington at the close of Congress in 1854, he said he could have traveled from Boston to Chicago in the light of his own blazing effigies.

Lincoln had noted Douglas's rise while he himself was sinking into obscurity. But the repeal of the Missouri Compromise by the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 brought him to political life again with an earnestness and intensity of purpose that he had not experienced up to that time. He went into a deep and thorough study of the whole subject of slavery as it affected government in the territories, in the states, and in the nation. And when Douglas launched out on a speaking campaign in the fall of 1854 to redeem himself, Lincoln sounded at the state fair in Springfield, on October 4, the keynote of his campaign against him with a speech that must stand in history as his first great speech. He attacked unsparingly the record of Douglas and expressed a warning as to the danger of dissension and disunion that was certain to follow if the bars to slavery in the territories were let down. He continued speaking vigorously throughout this campaign along the same line. He saw in the effort of Douglas a movement of the South, not only to save slavery but to advance it. And he believed this would tend

to undermine the very principles of the Declaration of Independence. In his famous speech at Peoria, Illinois, October 16, 1854, he said in solemn warning: "In our greedy chase to make profit of the negro, let us beware lest we 'cancel and tear to pieces' even the white man's charter of freedom." The Dred Scott Decision, which came so close upon Buchanan's inauguration that it gave color to the suspicion of a great conspiracy, aroused Lincoln still further. It held that neither Congress nor a territorial legislature could prohibit slavery in the territories and maintained, in effect, that the "negro had no rights which the white man was bound to respect."

In the meantime the old Whig party was dying, and Lincoln failed in his effort to be chosen as the United States Senator from Illinois to succeed Shields in 1855. The new Republican party was formed, and its organizers began making overtures to him. At first he repelled them. In October, 1854, he left Springfield in order to avoid any possible connection with the Republican convention which was being held there; and he later repudiated the use of his name on the Republican state committee, declaring that it was unauthorized. But the logic of events, helped along by his active young partner, Herndon, finally brought him into membership in this new party. On May 29, 1856, he made a speech on behalf of this party organization in which he held Douglas responsible for all the discord and dissension then springing up throughout the nation on the subject of slavery, of which the war in Kansas was only a striking indication. He was nominated

on June 17, 1858, as a candidate for the United States Senate against Douglas; and at that convention in Springfield he made the famous "House-Divided Speech," which became the basis of a great political agitation ending in the Civil War:

> If we could first know where we are and whither we are tending, we could better judge what to do and how to do it. We are now far into the fifth year since a policy was initiated with the avowed object, and confident promise, of putting an end to slavery agitation. Under the operation of that policy, that agitation not only has not ceased, but has constantly augmented. In my opinion it will not cease until a crisis shall have been reached and passed. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." I believe this government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect that it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the future spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in the states, old as well as new, North as well as South. Have we no tendency to the latter condition? Let any one who doubts carefully contemplate that now almost complete legal combination piece of machinery, so to speak — compounded of the Nebraska Doctrine and the Dred Scott Decision.

This speech brought Lincoln and Douglas face to face as opposing candidates. After some preliminary skirmishing, speaking from the same platform at different times and without arrangement, Lincoln challenged Douglas to a series of joint debates.

Douglas did not want to meet Abe in debate. He had nothing to gain by it, and he was more fully

The Francis E. Bryant homestead, Bement, Illinois. Here on July 29, 1858, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas made the arrangements for the seven joint debates that were held in Illinois.

aware than was any other person of that time that Lincoln was a formidable antagonist. When he had heard of Lincoln's nomination, he said to a group of Republicans in Washington, "Well, gentlemen, you have nominated a very able and a very honest man." A number of times after that he declared emphatically that "of all the d—— Whig rascals about Springfield, Abe Lincoln is the ablest and most honest." When he first discussed the plans for the campaign with party managers, he said:

> I shall have my hands full. He is the strong man of his party — full of wit, facts, dates — and the best stump speaker, with his droll ways and dry jokes, in the West. He is as honest as he is shrewd; and if I beat him, my victory will be hardly won.

Douglas frankly told his friends that he should like to refuse the challenge for the debates:

I do not feel, between you and me, that I want to go into this debate. The whole country knows me and has me measured. Lincoln, as regards myself, is comparatively unknown, and if he gets the best of this debate, — and I want to say he is the ablest man the Republicans have got, — I shall lose everything and Lincoln will gain everything. Should I win, I shall gain but little. I do not want to go into debate with Abe.

He said further at this time:

Gentlemen, you do not know Mr. Lincoln. I have known him long and well, and I know that I shall have anything but an easy task. I assure you I would rather meet any other man in the country, in this joint debate, than Abraham Lincoln.

But Douglas was not a man to shirk a fight, whatever the odds; and so steps were taken toward arranging the debates.

There is a white pyramidal marker some twelve feet high standing in the road between Monticello and Bement, Illinois, just a short distance from Monticello, which marks the spot where Lincoln and Douglas accidentally met on the afternoon of July 29, 1858, after some correspondence had passed in regard to these debates. The afternoon meeting in the road was followed by a meeting that night at a little white house in Bement, the home of F. E. Bryant, where the arrangements for the debates were closed. Senator and Mrs. Douglas were spending the night at the home of their friends, the Bryants. The little white house still stands exactly as it was then, and the room in which the conference occurred contains all the furniture that was in it at

the time. The chair in which Lincoln sat is still there, draped with the crêpe and bunting which Mr. Bryant placed upon it the hour that he learned of the President's assassination. The modest writing table upon which the terms were noted down is also preserved.

After this conference Lincoln took the midnight train for Springfield. The next day, July 30, 1858, in this room and on that table, Douglas wrote the letter which confirmed the arrangements:

BEMENT, PIATT CO., ILL., *July* 30, 1858

DEAR SIR: Your letter dated yesterday, accepting my proposition for a joint discussion at one prominent point in each congressional district, as stated in my previous letter, was received this morning.

The time and places designated are as follows:

Ottawa, La Salle County . .	August	21, 1858
Freeport, Stephenson County .	"	27, "
Jonesboro, Union County . .	September	15, "
Charleston, Coles County . .	"	18, "
Galesburg, Knox County . .	October	7, "
Quincy, Adams County . . .	"	13, "
Alton, Madison County . . .	"	15, "

I agree to your suggestion that we shall alternately open and close the discussion. I will speak at Ottawa one hour; you can reply, occupying an hour and a half, and I will then follow for half an hour. At Freeport, you shall open the discussion and speak one hour; I will follow for an hour and a half, and you can then reply for half an hour. We will alternate in like manner in each successive place.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

S. A. DOUGLAS

HON. A. LINCOLN, Springfield, Ill.

Lincoln answered immediately:

SPRINGFIELD, *July* 31, 1858

HON. S. A. DOUGLAS

DEAR SIR: Yours of yesterday, naming places, times, and terms for joint discussions between us, was received this morning. Although by the terms, as you propose, you take four openings and closes to my three, I accede, and thus close the arrangement. I direct this to you at Hillsboro, and shall try to have both your letter and this appear in the *Journal* and *Register* of Monday morning.

Your obedient servant,

A. LINCOLN

The debates took place exactly as scheduled. It was really a battle of giants. There has been nothing to equal it in our political history. While Douglas had the measurement of Lincoln's ability, Abe was under no delusion as to Douglas's, and he said:

Twenty-two years ago Judge Douglas and I first became acquainted. We were both young then — he a trifle younger than I. Even then we were both ambitious — I, perhaps, quite as much as he. With me, the race of ambition has been a failure — a flat failure; with him, it has been one of splendid success. His name fills the nation, and is not unknown even in foreign lands. I affect no contempt for the high eminence he has reached.

Again he said:

Senator Douglas is of world-wide renown. All the anxious politicians of his party, or who have been of his party for years past, have been looking upon him as certainly, at no distant day, to be the President of the United States. They have seen in his round, jolly, fruitful face post offices, land offices, marshalships, and Cabinet appointments, chargeships, and foreign missions, bursting and sprouting out in wonderful exuberance, ready to be

laid hold of by their greedy hands. And as they have been gazing upon this attractive picture so long, they cannot, in the little distraction that has taken place in the party, bring themselves to give up the charming hope; but with greedier anxiety they rush about him, sustain him, and give him marches, triumphal entries, and receptions beyond what even in the days of his highest prosperity they could have brought about in his favor. On the contrary, nobody has ever expected me to be President. In my poor, lean, lank face, nobody has ever seen that any cabbages were sprouting out. These are disadvantages, all taken together, that the Republicans labor under. *We* have to fight this battle upon principle and upon principle alone.

Douglas used all his superior tactics. In the first debate he began by seeming to look down on Lincoln. He then went on to say:

In the remarks I have made on this platform, and the position of Mr. Lincoln upon it, I mean nothing personally disrespectful or unkind to that gentleman. I have known him for nearly twenty-five years. There were many points of sympathy between us when we first got acquainted. We were both comparatively boys, and both struggling with poverty in a strange land. I was a school teacher in the town of Winchester, and he a flourishing grocery keeper in the town of Salem. He was more successful in his occupation than I was in mine, and hence more fortunate in this world's goods. Lincoln is one of those peculiar men who perform with admirable skill everything they undertake. I made as good a school teacher as I could, and when a cabinetmaker I made a good bedstead and tables, although my old boss said I succeeded better with bureaus and secretaries than with anything else; but I believe that Lincoln was always more successful in business than I, for his business enabled him to get into the legislature. I met him there, however, and had sympathy

with him, because of the uphill struggle we both had in life. He was then just as good at telling an anecdote as now. He could beat any of the boys wrestling, or running a footrace, in pitching quoits, or tossing a copper; could ruin more liquor than all the boys of the town together, and the dignity and impartiality with which he presided at a horse race or fist fight excited the admiration and won the praise of everybody that was present and participated. I sympathized with him because he was struggling with difficulties, and so was I. Mr. Lincoln served with me in the legislature of 1836, when we both retired, and he subsided, or became submerged, and he was lost sight of as a public man for some years. In 1846, when Wilmot introduced his celebrated proviso and the abolition tornado swept over the country, Lincoln again turned up as a member of Congress from the Sangamon district. I was then in the Senate of the United States, and was glad to welcome my old friend and companion.

It will be observed that Stephen was not entirely fair to Abraham in all parts of this statement, although it carried an atmosphere of fairness. Abe met him blow for blow, part of the time with quizzical good humor but more often with a deeply serious vein. At times there were bitter personal clashes. There was very little new material developed in these set debates. They fought back and forth over the very points which had appeared in both their speeches often during the past four years. Lincoln's House-Divided Speech was the principal subject of Douglas's attack. He denounced it as raising a sectional issue, intended to bring about equality between white and black. Lincoln countered by attacking furiously Douglas's principle of squatter sovereignty and the Dred Scott Decision. The last extended the prin-

ciple to the point of making slavery almost secure, even in free states. He made his own position as explicit as possible. Answering Douglas's attack as to social equality, he said after reading from one of his speeches which Douglas had misquoted:

Now, gentlemen, I don't want to read at any great length; but this is the true complexion of all I have ever said in regard to the institution of slavery and the black race. This is the whole of it; and anything that argues me into his idea of perfect social and political equality with the negro is but a specious and fantastic arrangement of words, by which a man can prove a horse-chestnut to be a chestnut horse. I will say here while upon this subject that I have no purpose, either directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so. I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the white and black races. There is a physical difference between the two, which in my judgment will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality; and, inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference, I as well as Judge Douglas am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position.

I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that notwithstanding all this there is no reason in the world why the negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence, — the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas he is not my equal in many respects, — certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral or intellectual endowment. But in the right to eat the bread without the leave of anybody else, which his own hand earns, he is my equal and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man.

First National Pictures

Lincoln and Douglas, about to debate, being introduced to their audience at Freeport, Illinois. "Still" from a photoplay entitled "Abraham Lincoln."

And he sustained the stand he had taken in his House-Divided Speech, in the following language:

He has read from my speech in Springfield, in which I say that "a house divided against itself cannot stand." Does the judge say it can stand? I don't know whether he does or not. The judge does not seem to be attending to me just now, but I would like to know if it is his opinion that a house divided against itself can stand. If he does, then there is a question of veracity, not between him and me, but between the judge and authority of a somewhat higher character.

Now, my friends, I ask your attention to this matter for the purpose of saying something seriously. I know that the judge may readily enough agree with me that the maxim which was put forth by the Savior is true, but he may allege that I misapply it; and the judge has a right

to urge that in my application I do misapply it, and then I have a right to show that I do not misapply it. When he undertakes to say that because I think this nation, so far as the question of slavery is concerned, will all become one thing or all the other I am in favor of bringing about a dead uniformity in the various states in all their institutions, he argues erroneously.

The great variety of the local institutions in the states, springing from differences in the soil, differences in the face of the country, and in the climate, are bonds of union. They do not make "a house divided against itself," but they make a house united. If they produce in one section of the country what is called for by the wants of another section, and this other section can supply the wants of the first, they are not matters of discord, but bonds of union, — true bonds of union.

But can this question of slavery be considered as among these varieties in the institutions of the country? I leave it to you to say whether in the history of our government this institution of slavery has not always failed to be a bond of union, and on the contrary has been an apple of discord and an element of division in the house. I ask you to consider whether, so long as the moral constitution of men's minds shall continue to be the same after this generation and assemblage shall sink into the grave, and another race shall arise with the same moral and intellectual development we have, — whether, if that institution is standing in the same irritating position in which it now is, it will not continue an element of division?

If so, then I have a right to say that in regard to this question the Union is a house divided against itself; and when the judge reminds me that I have often said to him that the institution of slavery has existed for eighty years in some states, and yet it does not exist in some others, I agree to the fact, and I account for it by looking at the position in which our fathers originally placed it, — restricting it from the new territories where it had gone, and legislating to cut off its source by the abrogation of

the slave trade, thus putting the seal of legislation against its spread. The public mind did rest in the belief that it was in the course of ultimate extinction.

But lately I think, — and in this I charge nothing on the judge's motives, — lately I think that he and those acting with him have placed that institution on a new basis, which looks to the perpetuity and nationalization of slavery. And, while it is placed upon this new basis, I say and I have said that I believe we shall not have peace upon the question until the opponents of slavery arrest the further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or, on the other hand, that its advocates will push it forward until it shall become alike lawful in all the states, old as well as new, North as well as South.

Now I believe if we could arrest the spread, and place it where Washington and Jefferson and Madison placed it, it would be in the course of ultimate extinction, and the public mind would as for eighty years past believe that it was in the course of ultimate extinction. The crisis would be past, and the institution might be let alone for a hundred years — if it should live so long — in the states where it exists, yet it would be going out of existence in the way best for both the black and the white races.

Douglas tried cleverly to avoid discussing the right and wrong of slavery. He was for squatter sovereignty and didn't care "whether slavery is voted down or voted up." Of course, he had to defend the Dred Scott Decision. Lincoln drove him mercilessly to the wall on the moral issue. He said:

Judge Douglas is going back to the era of our Revolution and to the extent of his ability muzzling the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return. When he invites any people, willing to have slavery, to establish it, he is blowing out the moral lights around us. When he says he "cares

not whether slavery is voted down or voted up," — that it is a sacred right of self-government, — he is, in my judgment, penetrating the human soul and eradicating the light of reason and the love of liberty in this American people.

And now I will only say that when, by all these means and appliances, Judge Douglas shall succeed in bringing public sentiment to an exact accordance with his own views, — when these vast assemblages shall echo back all these sentiments, — when they shall come to repeat his views and to avow his principles and to say all that he says on these mighty questions, — then it needs only the formality of the second Dred Scott Decision, which he indorses in advance, to make slavery alike lawful in all the states, — old as well as new, North as well as South.

We have noted the great contrast between these men. There were elements of similarity. Both were masters of the subjects discussed. Both were intensely earnest and patriotic. While Douglas was unquestionably sincere, he did not have the far-reaching consistency and honesty in adhering to fundamental principles that characterized Honest Abe. Abe pressed the main issue home with such unerring logic that the entire nation, following the debates, came to see and feel the inevitable truth of the "house divided against itself" doctrine.

An outstanding incident of one of the debates has received more attention than any other. In the opening debate at Ottawa, Douglas asked Lincoln some questions, which were seemingly intended to commit him to the abolition program. Lincoln said he would answer them in the next debate, at Freeport, and would propose some questions of his own.

It was in proposing these questions, or one of them,

at Freeport, that Lincoln made what is generally accepted as his greatest political stroke. He prepared the following as one of the questions:

> Can the people of a United States territory, in any lawful way, against the wish of any citizen of the United States, exclude slavery from its limits prior to the formation of a state constitution?

It was intended to commit Douglas unqualifiedly for or against the principle of the Dred Scott Decision, which held that neither Congress nor a territorial legislature could prohibit slavery in the territories.

His political friends to whom he submitted the question at a council of party leaders the morning of the debate strongly advised against it. They believed that Douglas would answer in the affirmative, according to his policy of "popular sovereignty," and that this would increase his popularity in Illinois and win the race.

But Abe was looking far ahead. He said:

> If Douglas answers that the people of a territory cannot exclude slavery, I will beat him. But if he answers as you say he will, and as I believe he will, he may beat me for senator, but he will never be President.

This debate at Freeport aroused great enthusiasm. People came from the hills and the plains, on foot, by horseback, in wagons, bringing their food with them and sleeping by the roadside. The "highways were black with people." Before noon the little town had more than twice its population, and the streets were crowded with an arguing, talking, laughing, throng. Special trains rolled in, bringing

more people. By two o'clock the little grove now known as Taylor Park was jammed.

Lincoln opened the debate and soon asked the fateful question. As expected Douglas answered unqualifiedly, "Yes." He said:

> It matters not what way the Supreme Court may hereafter decide as to the abstract question whether slavery may or may not go into a territory under the Constitution; the people have the lawful means to introduce it or exclude it as they please, for the reason that slavery cannot exist a day or an hour anywhere unless it is supported by local police regulations.
>
> Those police regulations can only be established by the local legislature; and if the people are opposed to slavery, they will elect representatives to that body who will by unfriendly legislation effectually prevent the introduction of it into their midst. If, on the contrary, they are for it, their legislation will favor its extension. Hence, no matter what the decision of the Supreme Court may be on that abstract question, still the right of the people to make a slave territory or a free territory is perfect and complete under the Nebraska bill. I hope Mr. Lincoln deems my answer satisfactory on that point.

This famous utterance won Douglas great favor throughout Illinois. Squatter sovereignty sounded good as a temporary expedient. But Lincoln took deadly advantage of the fallacy of this view. It was inconsistent with the pro-slavery policy and the Dred Scott Decision, for slavery had already worked its way into territories without "police regulations."

So this "battle of the giants" raged throughout Illinois, and the whole nation watched with interest. Unbiased hearers said that when Douglas spoke they felt sorry for Lincoln, and when Lincoln spoke

they felt sorry for Douglas. It was a royal match between "Little Doug" and "Long Abe."

Lincoln's rugged strength and temperate habits showed to advantage over the fast-living Douglas. Abe made the rounds on common trains, sometimes driving across country, but always living simply; while Douglas traveled on a special train with his beautiful young bride, indulging in much merry-making and feasting. In the last debate at Alton, Steve was worn and worried; and although he fought gamely to the last, his voice had lost the famous Douglas "bark" and he finished his main speech almost in a whisper. Abe, as fresh and cool as ever, handed his old linen duster to a bystander and with quaint good humor said, "Hold this while I stone Stephen."

It is to the credit of Douglas that he broke with his party during the course of these debates on the question of the admission of Kansas, which had been carried by the pro-slavery forces without a fair vote of the people. Douglas openly defied President Buchanan and made an attack upon his own party leaders in the Senate on this issue. In a personal interview at the White House the weak and aged Buchanan rose with towering dignity and threatened to crush Douglas after the manner, he said, in which President Jackson had crushed unfaithful members of his party who tried to thwart the Administration. Whereupon the valorous Douglas retorted, "I wish to remind you, sir, that General Jackson is dead."

Abe had a good deal of fun over this scrap within

the party. He said that as between Douglas and Buchanan he was like the woman who, while watching the fight between her husband and a bear, shouted turn about, "Go it, husband; go it, bear."

At the same time he gave serious warning to those who held that because of Douglas's independence his return to the Senate would be the best way to stop the slavery advance.

> There are those who denounce us openly to their own friends, and yet whisper us softly that Senator Douglas is the aptest instrument there is with which to effect that object. They wish us to infer all from the fact that he now has a little quarrel with the present head of the dynasty, and that he has regularly voted with us on a single point on which he and we have never differed. They remind us that he is a great man, and that the largest of us are very small ones. Let this be granted. But "a living dog is better than a dead lion." Judge Douglas, if not a dead lion for this work, is at least a caged and toothless one. How can he oppose the advances of slavery? He doesn't care anything about it. His avowed mission is impressing the "public heart" to care nothing about it.

So far as these immediate debates were concerned, Douglas got the better of Lincoln. He was elected to the Senate, although the Republicans carried the state ticket. Senators were elected by the legislature; and under the system of apportionment then in effect in Illinois Douglas received fifty-four votes and Lincoln forty-one. Of course Lincoln was deeply disappointed. He said he felt like the boy who stubbed his toe and said that "it hurt too bad to laugh, and he was too big to cry!"

But he did not feel that all was lost. He wrote:

"Lincoln, the Debater." A bronze statue by Leonard Grunnell, unveiled at Freeport, Illinois, on August 27, 1929, on the seventy-first anniversary of the Lincoln-Douglas debate at Freeport.

I am glad I made the late race. It gave me a hearing on the great and durable question of the age which I would have had in no other way; and though I now sink out of the view and shall be forgotten, I believe I have made some marks which shall tell for the cause of civil liberty long after I am gone.

Later he wrote a supporter who continued to sulk:

I believe according to a letter of yours to Hatch, you are "feeling like hell yet." Quit that. You will soon feel better. Another "blow up" is coming; and we shall have fun again. Douglas managed to be supported both as the best instrument to put down and to uphold the slave power; but no ingenuity can long keep the antagonism in harmony.

Abe proved to be a true prophet, for while Douglas's speech known as the "Freeport Heresy" won him favor in the North, it alienated the South from him. Southern Senate leaders deposed Douglas from the chairmanship of the Committee on Territories, which he had held for eleven years. Senator Benjamin of Louisiana denounced him in the Senate for his treason to the South and predicted Lincoln's ultimate success, as follows:

We accuse him for this; to wit, that having bargained with us upon a point as to which we were at issue, that it should be considered a judicial point; that he would abide the decision; that he would act under the decision, and consider it a doctrine of the party; that having said that to us here in the Senate, he went home, and, under the stress of a local election, his knees gave way, his whole person trembled. His adversary stood upon principle and was beaten; and, lo! he is the candidate of a mighty party for the presidency of the United States. The Senator from Illinois faltered. He got the prize for which

he faltered; but lo! the grand prize of his ambition today slips from his grasp because of his faltering in his former contest; and his success in the canvass for the Senate, purchased for an ignoble price, has cost him the loss of the presidency of the United States.

Lincoln became an acknowledged leader of his party throughout the nation. He was nominated and elected in the presidential campaign of 1860. Douglas was again his opponent as the candidate of the Democracy of the North, but the fatal split in the party made his election impossible. Lincoln received one hundred and eighty electoral votes and Douglas only twelve, although the popular vote of Douglas was not far below Lincoln's.

Douglas was greater in defeat than in victory. The historic rivalry ended with the beginning of Civil War. Douglas was faithful to the Union. After the election he assured the new President that he should have the support of the Democracy of the North. His untimely death on June 3, 1861, removed one of the President's ablest supporters.

There was a dramatic last scene between Lincoln and Douglas. At the inauguration on March 4, 1861, when Lincoln appeared on the platform carrying a gold-headed cane and a new silk hat, he was visibly embarrassed and looked about awkwardly for a place to lay his hat. Henry Watterson, a young Kentucky reporter, stepped forward with ready courtesy to relieve him. But there was one before him. Senator Douglas, who was standing near by as an honored guest, reached forth quickly with courtly grace and took the President's hat.

CHAPTER TWELVE

MAN OF THE HOUR

Much has been written about Lincoln's sudden emergence into greatness. The simple fact is that he merely developed with the emergency. He evolved from a clever speaker who dealt with every subject in a clear and sincere way to a classic orator when the occasion came for sublime oratory. His emergence in this field was simply the timely union of "man, subject, and occasion," which Daniel Webster gives as essential to great oratory. The potential "man" was there when Abe argued the Gray Goose Case as a Hoosier boy, but it required the stirring slavery agitation of 1854, sowing seeds of war and disunion, to produce the peerless orator worthy of the "subject and occasion."

Abraham Lincoln always despised slavery, loved union, sympathized with suffering, and hated injustice. When the enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, and the Dred Scott Decision brought to a climax a situation that menaced even the white man's charter of freedom, Lincoln was roused to action.

He then gave himself up to a thorough study of the subject of slavery and its relation to the Union. He searched the libraries of Illinois and of the nation for this purpose in the same way in which he had as a Hoosier boy ransacked the libraries of southern Indiana within a fifty-mile radius of his home to satisfy his thirst for knowledge. Now as a mature man, an experienced politician, and a seasoned

lawyer he mastered this subject just as in his Hoosier boyhood he had mastered lessons in the *Kentucky Preceptor* and problems in Pike's Arithmetic. He only did again what he had done in his young manhood with Kirkham's Grammar, Flint and Gibson's Surveying, and *Blackstone's Commentaries*. He was always thorough; his lifelong training in thought, study, and speech made him ready for the great opportunity that came to him to be the spokesman of the nation against slavery extension and the seeds of disunion.

His debates with Douglas gave him national fame. His location in the heart of the Central West gave him a favorable position for leadership in the new Republican party. His lack of prominence made him free of enmities that would have been a drag upon his strength as a leader. For these reasons he began to loom as a possible candidate for the presidency in 1860. Lincoln always coveted fame and honor, but at first his modesty interposed objections to his accepting honors. He said, "I admit I am ambitious and would like to be President. I am not insensible to the compliment you pay me and the interest you manifest in the matter; but there is no such good luck in store for me as the presidency of the United States." There were other men much more prominent.

What's the use of talking of me for the presidency, whilst we have such men as Seward, Chase, and others, who are so much better known to the people, and whose names are so intimately associated with the principles of the Republican party? Everybody knows them; nobody

scarcely outside of Illinois knows me. Besides, is it not, as a matter of justice, due to such men, who have carried this movement forward to its present status, in spite of fearful opposition, personal abuse, and hard names? I really think so.

But his friends persisted, and the country became interested.

Throughout the East the question was being asked, "Who is this Lincoln who made such a stand against Douglas?" He made his bow to the East in his Cooper Institute speech in New York on February 27, 1860. This speech made an impression upon leading men and great newspapers. Conservatively and clearly he defined the issue between the new party and the opposition as to slavery and its inevitable tendency toward disunion. He showed that the demands of the pro-slavery advocates, based upon the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the Fugitive Slave Law, and the Dred Scott Decision, must result in the overthrow of free constitutions everywhere:

> It is nothing to the contrary that they do not demand the whole of this just now. Demanding what they do, and for the reason they do, they can voluntarily stop nowhere short of this consummation. Holding as they do that slavery is morally right and socially elevating, they cannot cease to demand a full national recognition of it as a legal right and a social blessing.
>
> Nor can we justifiably withhold this on any ground save our conviction that slavery is wrong. If slavery is right, all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it are themselves wrong and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality — its universality; if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension — its enlargement. All

The Republican convention which nominated Lincoln, in session at Chicago, May, 1860. At the left side is the speaker's platform.

they ask we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right and our thinking it wrong is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy.

But he still held the position that the only immediate issue was slavery extension:

Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national territories and to overrun us here in these free states?

Upon this issue he urged the new party to stand fearlessly, and he closed with a ringing appeal: "Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that

faith let us to the end dare to do our duty as we understand it."

In the Illinois convention at Decatur, May 9 and 10, 1860, Lincoln's candidacy was formally launched by a resolution which declared "that Abraham Lincoln is the choice of the Republican party of Illinois for the presidency, and that delegates from this state are instructed to use all honorable means to secure his nomination by the Chicago convention and to vote as a unit for him." It was at the convention in Decatur that the humble fence rail became a political symbol. At a dramatic moment in the proceedings old John Hanks, who had been a boyhood companion of Lincoln, marched around the convention hall bearing on his shoulders two weather-worn fence rails. They were decorated with a banner inscribed: "Two rails from a lot made by Abraham Lincoln and John Hanks in the Sangamon Bottom in the year 1830." This exhibition brought forth a loud demonstration and Abe was dragged forth from an obscure place in the rear of the stage. He said:

> I suppose you want to know something about those things [pointing to old John and the rails]. Well, the truth is John Hanks and I did make rails in the Sangamon Bottom. I don't know whether we made those rails or not; fact is, I don't think they are a credit to the makers [laughing as he spoke]. But I do know this: I made rails then, and I think I could make better ones than these now.

When the national convention was held in the famous wigwam at Chicago the next week, opening on May 16, these rails were there in the Lincoln

headquarters, beautifully embellished with flowers, ribbons, and lighted tapers. It was because of the publicity given these rails in the campaign that Lincoln became known as the "rail splitter" candidate.

It was fortunate for him that the convention was held in Chicago. Illinois was there in great force. The Middle West and the states of the border came, determined to be heard. The best-known candidates were William H. Seward of New York and Salmon P. Chase of Ohio. Both of them were United States Senators, and each had been Governor of his state. They had large followings, especially Seward. New York was under the leadership of the most famous political general of that day, Thurlow Weed. Weed came with a large delegation to nominate Seward, and fully expected to win on the first ballot. But the prairie commonwealth outdid the Empire State both in the volume of its demonstration and the cleverness of its political maneuvering. The doubtful states of New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Iowa maintained that the party could not win with Seward. The border states stood for a candidate who was close to their peculiar problems. They were the fringes of both North and South. Honest Abe — rail splitter, commoner, pioneer son of Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois — filled the need.

The danger was that Seward would win on the first ballot. Two hundred and thirty-three votes were necessary to a choice. When the first ballot passed with Seward receiving 173, Lincoln 102, and the rest scattering, confidence grew that Lincoln would win. He was nominated on the third ballot.

Indiana and Illinois were the only states that cast the solid vote of their entire delegation for Lincoln on every ballot. Hannibal Hamlin of Maine was nominated for Vice President.

It seemed as if the hand of fate had directed the choice of Lincoln. Addison G. Procter, a delegate from Kansas and the youngest member of that convention of 1860, said in an address before the Chicago Historical Society on April 4, 1918 — fifty-eight years afterward: "The coming events were casting their dread shadows before us. It was an ordeal. All I can say is — we put our trust in God, and He who makes no mistakes gave us Abraham Lincoln."

Lincoln did not attend the convention but tried to busy himself in Springfield as if he were not concerned with what was happening at Chicago. However, he kept close to the telegraph office where bulletins were being constantly received from the convention. When the news of his victory came and all Springfield arose in a mighty demonstration to cheer its favorite son, Lincoln escaped from the crowd of excited people as soon as possible. "My friends," he said, "I am glad to receive your congratulations, and as there is a little woman down on Eighth Street who will be glad to hear the news, you must excuse me until I inform her." And with long strides he carried the triumphant word to the expectant Mary.

During the campaign Abe remained at his home in Springfield, receiving delegations and keeping in close touch with the national situation. The result was clearly foreordained; the opposition was hopelessly divided. Douglas and Johnson were the

nominees of the Northern Democrats, Breckinridge and Lane of the Southern Democrats, and Bell and Everett of the Constitutional Union Party. So the North supported Lincoln, and the South supported Breckinridge. When the electoral votes were cast, Lincoln received 184, Breckinridge 72, Bell 39, and Douglas 12. The rail splitter had a total majority of 57 electoral votes. The popular vote of Douglas, however, was three-fourths that of Lincoln.

Lincoln remained in Springfield until shortly before the inauguration. He received many delegations of famous leaders. All the while he was feeling the pulse of the nation and getting ready for his task. It was clear from the first that his election meant secession. South Carolina passed an ordinance of secession on December 20; Mississippi, January 9; Florida, January 10; Alabama, January 11; Georgia, January 19; Louisiana, January 26; and Texas, February 1. All these states began seizing forts and arsenals. The *Star of the West* was fired upon on January 9, when trying to carry provisions to Fort Sumter. On February 4, 1861, delegates from the seven seceded states held a constitutional convention at Montgomery, Alabama, and framed a constitution for the Confederate States of America. This convention chose Jefferson Davis as president and Alexander H. Stevens as vice president. Montgomery was selected as the capital of the Confederacy.

What would the new President do? He answered all inquiries mildly and guardedly. He said he was in the position of a minister he once knew, who had

to cross Fox River on his circuit. On being told that Fox River was terribly swollen and asked what he was going to do about crossing it the next day, the minister answered that he made it a rule never to cross Fox River until he came to it.

He went quietly about forming his Cabinet and preparing his inaugural message. For this purpose he shut himself up in a little office room that is still preserved, and asked his partner, Herndon, to furnish him with a copy of the Constitution, Henry Clay's speech of 1850, Jackson's message against nullification, and Webster's reply to Hayne. He left Springfield long enough to pay a last visit to the humble home of his foster mother in Coles County and to stand at his father's grave.

It was decided that he ought to leave early for Washington; so he started from Springfield by special train on Monday, February 11, and spent the first night in Indianapolis. The Hoosier capital gave him a royal reception. In answer to the carefully prepared speech of formal welcome by Governor Morton at the train, Lincoln said in part:

> You have been pleased to address yourself to me chiefly in behalf of this glorious Union in which we live, in all of which you have my hearty sympathy, and, as far as may be within my power, will have, one and inseparably, my hearty consideration. While I do not expect upon this occasion, or until I get to Washington, to attempt any lengthy speech, I will only say that to the salvation of the Union there needs but one single thing — the hearts of a people like yours. When the people rise in mass in behalf of the Union and the liberties of this country, truly it may be said, "The gates of hell cannot prevail against them."

In a speech made later the same evening he said:

> Solomon says there is "a time to keep silence," and when men wrangle by the mouth with no certainty that they mean the same thing while using the same word, it perhaps were as well if they would keep silence.

And then after a brief discussion of the words "coercion" and "invasion," consisting mostly of questions, he concluded:

> Fellow citizens, I am not asserting anything; I am merely asking questions for you to consider. And now allow me to bid you farewell.

On this occasion he was drawn through the streets by four white horses of such beauty and spirit as to call forth a spirited compliment from the President-elect. It was these same beautiful horses with the same driver that drew the lifeless body of the martyred President through the city of Indianapolis four years later.

The trip to Washington was a triumphant journey of twelve days. Lincoln was hailed with great enthusiasm all along the way and given grand receptions everywhere. He made several brief and thoughtful speeches but carefully avoided giving any particular indications of his policy. In his speech at Columbus, Ohio, on the second day — February 12, his birthday — he made reference in the following words to this attitude of silence that he was maintaining:

> In the varying and repeatedly shifting scenes of the present, and without a precedent which could enable me to judge by the past, it has seemed fitting that, before speaking upon the difficulties of the country, I should have gained a view of the whole field, being at liberty to

modify and change the course of policy as future events may make a change.

I have not maintained silence from any want of real anxiety. It is a good thing that there is no more anxiety, for there is nothing going wrong. . . . All we want is time, patience, and a reliance on that God who has never forsaken this people.

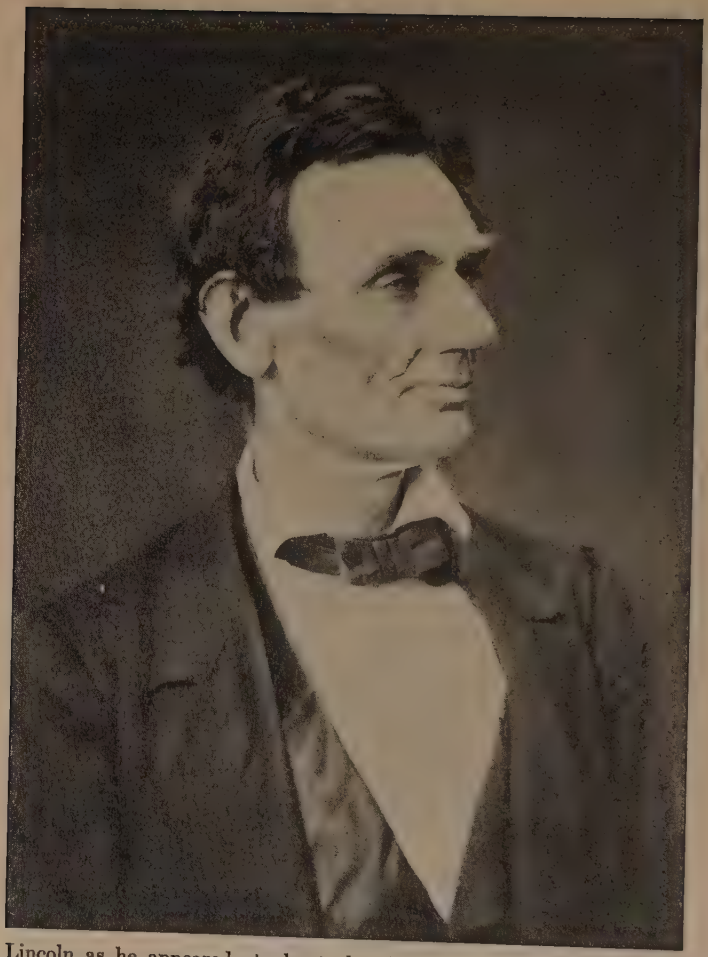
On the twenty-second, Washington's birthday, he was at Philadelphia. An impressive ceremony was arranged for him there in Independence Hall. Kansas had been admitted into the Union on January 29, adding the thirty-fourth star to the American flag; so this occasion was chosen for raising the new flag. It was attended with great solemnity, as several state flags had already supplanted the stars and stripes in the South, and as a consequence any changes in the flag had taken on deep significance. Standing in Independence Hall, from which the great charter of American freedom had been issued, Lincoln said:

I am filled with deep emotion at finding myself standing in this place, where were collected together the wisdom, the patriotism, the devotion to principle from which sprang the institutions under which we live. You have kindly suggested to me that in my hands is the task of restoring peace to our distracted country. I can say in return, sir, that all the political sentiments I entertain have been drawn, so far as I have been able to draw them, from the sentiments which originated in and were given to the world from this hall. I have never had a feeling, politically, that did not spring from the sentiments embodied in the Declaration of Independence. I have often pondered over the dangers which were incurred by the men who assembled here and framed and adopted that Declaration.

I have pondered over the toils that were endured by the officers and soldiers of the army who achieved that independence. I have often inquired of myself what great principle or idea it was that kept this confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of separation of the colonies from the Motherland but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but hope to all the world for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights would be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance. This is the sentiment embodied in the Declaration of Independence. Now, my friends, can this country be saved on that basis? If it can, I will consider myself one of the happiest men in the world if I can help save it. If it cannot be saved upon that principle, it will be truly awful. But if this country cannot be saved without giving up that principle, I was about to say that I would rather be assassinated on this spot than surrender it. Now, in my view of the present aspect of affairs, there is no need of bloodshed unless it is forced upon the government. The government will not use force, unless force is used against it.

My friends, this is wholly an unprepared speech. I did not expect to be called on to say a word when I came here. I supposed I was merely to do something toward raising a flag. I may, therefore, have said something indiscreet. [Cries of, "No, no."] But I have said nothing but what I am willing to live by, and, if it be the pleasure of Almighty God, to die by.

He arrived in Washington on February 23, nine days before the inauguration. He had been carefully guarded. Frequent threats of assassination had been received. Everywhere dark predictions had been current that he would never take the oath of office. But he was inaugurated on March 4, 1861. The Inaugural Address was a masterpiece of states-



Lincoln as he appeared at about the time of his nomination for the presidency. (From a photograph.) He began to wear a beard shortly after this time.

manship and of patriotic appeal. It was a clear statement of his purpose to defend the Union. After proclaiming the indestructibility of the Union and the fallacy of secession, he said:

I therefore consider that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken, and to the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all the states. Doing this I deem to be only a simple duty on my part; and I shall perform it, so far as practicable, unless my rightful masters, the American people, shall withhold the requisite means, or, in some authoritative manner, direct the contrary. I trust this will not be regarded as a menace, but only as the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself. In doing this there need be no bloodshed or violence; and there shall be none, unless it be forced upon the national authority. The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts; but beyond what may be necessary for these objects there will be no invasion, no using of force against or among the people anywhere.

He emphasized the relationship between all parts of the Union:

Physically speaking, we cannot separate. We cannot remove our respective sections from each other, nor build an impassable wall between them. A husband and wife may be divorced and go out of the presence and beyond the reach of each other, but the different parts of our country cannot do this. They cannot but remain face to face; and intercourse, either amicable or hostile, must continue between them. It is impossible, then, to make that intercourse more advantageous or more satisfactory after separation than before. Can aliens make treaties

easier than friends can make laws? Can treaties be more faithfully enforced between aliens than laws can among friends? Suppose you go to war, you cannot fight always; and when after much loss on both sides and no gain on either you cease fighting, the identical old questions as to terms of intercourse are again upon you.

He urged reliance upon the wisdom and justice of the people:

Why should there not be a patient confidence in the ultimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world? In our present differences is either party without faith of being in the right? If the Almighty Ruler of nations, with His eternal truth and justice, be on your side of the North, or yours of the South, that truth and that justice will surely prevail, by the judgment of this great tribunal of the American people.

And he closed with one of the most eloquent appeals of which history has any record:

My countrymen, one and all, think calmly and well upon this whole subject. Nothing valuable can be lost by taking time. If there be an object to hurry any of you in hot haste to a step which you would never take deliberately, that object will be frustrated by taking time; but no good object can be frustrated by it. Such of you as are now dissatisfied still have the old Constitution unimpaired, and on the sensitive point, the laws of your own framing under it; while the new administration will have no immediate power, if it would, to change either. If it were admitted that you who are dissatisfied hold the right side in this dispute, there is still no single good reason for precipitate action. Intelligence, patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty. In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, are

the momentous issues of civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in Heaven to destroy the government, while I shall have the most solemn one to "preserve, protect, and defend" it.

I am loth to close. We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break, our bonds of affection. The mystic cords of memory, stretching from every battlefield and patriot grave to every living heart and hearthstone all over this broad land, will yet swell the chorus of the Union when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

More touching than all else perhaps up to this time was the simple expression he had made to his old friends and neighbors when he left Springfield on February 11. Notwithstanding a heavy rainstorm a crowd had gathered at the train. He addressed them briefly from the rear platform:

My friends, no one not in my situation can appreciate my feeling of sadness at this parting. To this place and the kindness of this people I owe everything. Here I have lived a quarter of a century and have passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return, with a task before me greater than that which rested upon Washington. Without the assistance of that Divine Being who ever attended him I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail. Trusting in Him who can go with me and remain with you and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell.

It was a touching farewell, and it was indeed a farewell. He was never to return except in a solemnly impressive funeral pageant.

The hour had called and the man was ready.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

EMANCIPATOR

SLAVERY was an issue in Kentucky in the childhood days of Abraham Lincoln. His parents, his teachers, and the ministers whom he heard preach were deeply opposed to it. At the same time he had friends and relatives who were slave owners. He was taken as a child into free territory partly because of the existence of slavery in the region where he was born. His training from earliest childhood was against slavery. In one of his presidential pronouncements upon this subject he said, "I am naturally anti-slavery. If slavery is not wrong, nothing is wrong. I cannot remember when I did not so think and feel."

He grew up in Indiana in an atmosphere of freedom. The region in which he lived after his seven childhood years in Kentucky was a land that had been peculiarly devoted to freedom. Indiana and Illinois came into the Union as free states because they were of the Old Northwest, which by the heroic conquest of Clark and the great Ordinance of 1787 was forever pledged to freedom.

All Lincoln's education was in the direction of anti-slavery. The books which he learned by rote, such as the *Kentucky Preceptor* and even the old blue-back speller, abounded in messages and mottoes that literally rang with the clarion notes of freedom. Next to the Bible itself the Declaration of Independence was his constant study. This kind of culture fixed his belief that slavery was wrong. When he said, "I am naturally anti-slavery," he

was expressing a conviction that came from the depths of his being.

From earliest childhood Lincoln abhorred wrong in every form. He could not endure cruelty to any living thing. He tells that he shot a wild turkey once when he was eight years old and "never after that pulled trigger on any larger game." He wrote essays and made speeches in his school days on cruelty to animals. How could he have felt anything other than deep abhorrence toward all the cruelties incident to human slavery?

Perhaps, next to the Emancipation Proclamation itself, his best-known utterance against slavery was his indignant declaration as a backwoods youth when the evils of slavery first came to his immediate and thoughtful attention during a flatboat trip to New Orleans. He saw slaves bought and sold on the auction block in the streets of New Orleans, and he saw human beings chained and lashed by their masters. A well-authenticated legend has come down to us that this experience roused within him all the righteous indignation of his nature, so that with clenched fists he declared, "If ever I get a chance to hit that thing, I'll hit it hard."

Lincoln's entire life identified him with poverty and hardship. He knew what it was to be poor, and his sympathies were always with the unfortunate. He was deeply inured to a life of labor. He knew the meaning of service in its lowliest forms. His entire youth and early manhood were spent at hard and humble toil. He could not fail to grasp with deep significance the hardships of the slave, or to

contrast the conditions of slavery with those of free labor.

While his contact with slavery in childhood caused him to hate slavery, it saved him from ever extending hatred to the slaveholder. Early in his administration he withheld his signature two days from the bill abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia in order that ex-Governor Wycliffe of Kentucky might return to his home two old slaves whom he had in Washington. Even the Emancipator felt that these old darkies would be better off in the care of a kind master in Kentucky than with untried freedom in the great city.

Shortly after the removal of the Lincolns to Illinois the abolition movement became very strong throughout that section. Sectional issues of slavery began to be rigidly drawn. Conflicting views began to reflect economic interest. Slavery began to appear as a terrible wrong to the North, where it could not exist economically; while at the same time its economic necessity in the South tended to an equal degree to dwarf the moral issue there.

In the early days of the life of the new nation even large slave owners admitted the evils of the system and looked forward to its gradual abolition. Washington, who had many slaves, wrote in 1786: "There is no man living who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of slavery." And he made provision for the emancipation of his own slaves, which went into effect immediately after his death. Thomas Jefferson, who was also a slave owner, expressed himself upon this subject with the

sincerity he displayed in the Declaration of Independence, when he wrote: "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just; that his justice cannot sleep forever. . . . This abomination must have an end. And there is a superior bench reserved in heaven for those who hasten it."

But with the rapid development of abolition sentiment in the North, the successors of Washington and Jefferson in the South were moved to the extreme of defending slavery as a social and economic necessity and even as a matter of positive right and justice. It was characteristic of Lincoln that he understood and appreciated the attitude of the South. This was due in part to his Kentucky associations — especially to his acquaintance with conditions in his wife's home town of Lexington. He sympathized with Southern people always. His best expression of this sympathy was in his famous Peoria speech on October 16, 1854:

I think I have no prejudice against the Southern people. They are just what we would be in their situation. If slavery did not now exist among them, they would not introduce it. If it did now exist among us, we should not instantly give it up. This I believe of the masses North and South. Doubtless there are individuals on both sides who would not hold slaves under any circumstances, and others who would gladly introduce slavery anew, if it were out of existence. We know that some Southern men do free their slaves, go North, and become tip-top abolitionists; while some Northern ones go South and become most cruel slave masters.

When Southern people tell us they are no more responsible for the origin of slavery than we, I acknowledge the fact. When it is said that the institution exists, and that

it is very difficult to get rid of it in any satisfactory way, I can understand and appreciate the saying. I surely will not blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself. If all earthly power were given me, I should not know what to do as to the existing institution.

It can be easily understood, therefore, that he had no sympathy with radical abolition tendencies, but at the same time he did not permit his disgust at the excesses of abolitionists to dim his view as to the fundamental wrong of slavery. When the riot took place at Alton, Illinois, in 1837 and the anti-slavery editor, Elijah Lovejoy, was killed in a wild reaction against abolition, Lincoln was a member of the legislature of Illinois. This legislature passed a strong resolution of disapproval of abolition societies, asserting "that the right of property in slaves is sacred to the slaveholding states by the Federal Constitution, and that they cannot be deprived of that right without their consent." Lincoln did not support this resolution. While he agreed with its main sentiment, he was unwilling to express such a sentiment without at the same time condemning slavery as an evil; so he prepared a protest, which he succeeded in persuading only one fellow member to sign with him jointly:

Resolutions upon the subject of domestic slavery having passed both branches of the General Assembly at its present session, the undersigned hereby protest against the passage of the same.

They believe that the institution of slavery is founded on both injustice and bad policy, but that the promulgation of abolition doctrines tends rather to increase than abate its evils.

They believe that the Congress of the United States has no power under the Constitution to interfere with the institution of slavery in the different states.

They believe that the Congress of the United States has power under the Constitution to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, but that the power ought not to be exercised unless at the request of the people of the District.

The difference between these opinions and those contained in the above resolutions is their reason for entering this protest.

DAN STONE
A. LINCOLN
Representatives from the County of Sangamon

Twenty-three years later, when a candidate for the presidency, he made brief reference to this protest in his autobiography as follows:

March 3, 1837, by a protest entered upon the *Illinois House Journal* of that date, at pages 817 and 818, Abraham, with Dan Stone, another representative of Sangamon, briefly defined his position on the slavery question; and so far as it goes, it was then the same that it is now.

He voiced this same sentiment in an even more emphatic way fifteen years later, June 16, 1852, in his eulogy on the occasion of the death of Henry Clay. He justified, in the following words, the middle-ground position that had so persistently been taken by his idol, the Great Pacificator, who had ever stood between fiery abolitionists and pro-slavery fire eaters:

Those who would shiver into fragments the Union of these states, tear to tatters its now venerated Constitution, and even burn the last copy of the Bible, rather than slavery should continue a single hour, together with all

their more halting sympathizers, have received, and are receiving, their just execration; and the name and opinions and influence of Mr. Clay are fully and, as I trust, effectually and enduringly arrayed against them. But I would also, if I could, array his name, opinions, and influence against the opposite extreme — against a few but an increasing number of men who, for the sake of perpetuating slavery, are beginning to assail and to ridicule the white man's charter of freedom and declaration that "all men are created free and equal."

It is evident that in those formative years up to 1854, when the seeds of war and disunion were steadily germinating, Lincoln's anti-slavery sentiments were slumbering. On the occasion of his visit to the home of his friend, Joshua Speed, in Louisville in 1841, where he went as a sort of refuge from the overwhelming melancholy that beset him at that time, he looked upon slavery again, but apparently without the burning resentment that he had expressed as a raw young flatboatman at New Orleans. After his return home he wrote Miss Mary Speed, the sister of his friend, recounting a slave incident of the return journey. His principal feeling was one of curiosity because of the seeming content of the slaves who appeared to be in a much happier state of mind than he. He said:

A gentleman had purchased twelve negroes in different parts of Kentucky, and was taking them to a farm in the South. They were chained six and six together. A small iron clevis was around the left wrist of each, and this fastened to the main chain by a shorter one, at a convenient distance from the others, so that the negroes were strung together precisely like so many fish upon a trot-line. In this condition they were being separated forever

from the scenes of their childhood, their friends, their fathers and mothers, and brothers and sisters, and many of them from their wives and children, and going into perpetual slavery, where the lash of the master is proverbially more ruthless and unrelenting than any other where; and yet amid all these distressing circumstances, as we would think them, they were the most cheerful and apparently happy creatures on board. One, whose offense for which he had been sold was an over-fondness for his wife, played the fiddle almost continually, and the others danced, sang, cracked jokes, and played various games with cards from day to day. How true it is that "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," or in other words, that He renders the worst of human conditions tolerable, while He permits the best to be nothing better than tolerable.

But it is evident that this incident did really impress him profoundly, for fourteen years later, after he had become fully awakened to the slavery situation and its menace, he wrote his friend Speed, August 24, 1855, and referred to this same incident:

I confess I hate to see the poor creatures hunted down and caught and carried back to their unrequited toil; but I bite my lips and keep quiet. In 1841 you and I had a rather tedious low-water trip on the steamboat from Louisville to St. Louis. You may remember, as well as I do, that from Louisville to the mouth of the Ohio there were on board ten or a dozen slaves shackled together with irons. That sight was a continual torment to me; and I see something like it every time I touch the Ohio or any slave border. It is not fair for you to assume that I have no interest in a thing which has, and continually exerts, the power of making me miserable. You ought rather to appreciate how much the great body of the Northern people do crucify their feelings in order to maintain their loyalty to the Constitution and the Union. I do oppose

the extension of slavery, because my judgment and feeling so prompt me; and I am under no obligations to the contrary. If for this you and I must differ, differ we must.

During his campaigns for Congress throughout the late forties and including his one term of service in the lower house of Congress, he took no pronounced stand for the abolition of slavery. But he frequently expressed his views in moderate language as to its essential evil and his hope that it might be restricted so that it would gradually die. When the slavery question arose in connection with the annexation of Texas, he expressed himself concerning it in a letter of October 3, 1845, as follows:

I perhaps ought to say that individually I was never much interested in the Texas question. I never could see much good to come of annexation, inasmuch as they were already a free republican people on our own model. On the other hand, I never could very clearly see how the annexation would augment the evil of slavery. It always seemed to me that slaves would be taken there in about equal numbers, with or without annexation. And if more were taken because of annexation, still there would be just so many the fewer left where they were taken from. It is possibly true, to some extent, that, with annexation, some slaves may be sent to Texas and continued in slavery that otherwise might have been liberated. To whatever extent this may be true, I think annexation an evil. I hold it to be a paramount duty of us in the free states, due to the Union of the states, and perhaps to liberty itself (paradox though it may seem), to let the slavery of the other states alone; while on the other hand, I hold it to be equally clear that we should never knowingly lend ourselves, directly or indirectly, to prevent that slavery from dying a natural death — to find new places for it to live in, when it can no longer exist in the old.

"The First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation," a painting by Frank G. Carpenter. Lincoln is surrounded by the members of his Cabinet. At the left is Edwin M. Stanton, Secretary of War. Standing between Stanton and Lincoln is Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury. Seated, and facing Lincoln, is William H. Seward, Secretary of State. Between Lincoln and Seward sits Gideon Welles, Secretary of the Navy. Standing beside Welles, from left to right, are Caleb B. Smith, Secretary of the Interior, and Montgomery Blair, Postmaster General. Seated at the end of the table is Edward Bates, Attorney General.

During his term in Congress he voted in one form or another about forty times for the Wilmot Proviso, which proposed to prohibit slavery in the territory acquired from Mexico. He also introduced a measure tending to the prohibition of slavery in the District of Columbia, containing, however, a clause which saved the operation of the Fugitive Slave Law. His attitude at this time upon slavery did not satisfy either the abolitionists or the slaveholders, and his measure permitting the continuance of the Fugitive Slave Law in the District of Columbia invoked later Wendell Phillips's denunciation of him as the "slave hound of Illinois."

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, which repealed the Missouri Compromise and opened all the territories to the introduction of slavery, was the shock that awakened Abraham Lincoln. He said, "The repeal of the Missouri Compromise aroused him as he had never been before." The Missouri Compromise had prohibited slavery in the Louisiana Purchase north of 36° 30′. He saw in its repeal, concealed behind the principle of squatter sovereignty, the determination of pro-slavery interests not only to hold their own but to make a positive and vigorous advance. He could no longer rest in the belief that slavery was in the course of ultimate extinction. He began a vigorous study of the subject in all its aspects. He made many written notations, analyzing his views upon every side of the problem. One of his manuscript fragments went to the very root of slavery, analyzing it much after the manner of demonstrating a geometrical problem. He had recently mastered Euclid.

If A can prove, however conclusively, that he may of right enslave B, why may not B snatch the same argument and prove equally that he may enslave A? You say A is white and B is black. It is color, then, the lighter having the right to enslave the darker? Take care. By this rule you are to be slave to the first man you meet with a fairer skin than your own. You do not mean color exactly? You mean the whites are intellectually the superiors of the blacks, and therefore they have the right to enslave them? Take care again. By this rule you are to be slave to the first man you meet with an intellect superior to your own. But, you say, it is a question of interest, and if you make it your interest, you have the right to enslave another. Very well. And if he can make it his interest, he has the right to enslave you.

Another such fragment, bearing the date July 1, 1854, analyzes slavery in its relation to all labor:

Equality in society beats inequality alike whether the latter be of the British aristocratic sort or of the domestic slavery sort. We know Southern men declare that their slaves are better off than hired laborers amongst us. How little they know whereof they speak! There is no permanent class of hired laborers amongst us. Twenty-five years ago I was a hired laborer. The hired laborer of yesterday labors on his own account today, and will hire others to labor for him tomorrow. Advancement — improvement in condition — is the order of things in a society of equals. As labor is the common burden of our race, so the effort of some to shift their share of the burden on to the shoulders of others is the great durable curse of the race. Originally a curse for transgression upon the whole race, when, as by slavery, it is concentrated on a part only, it becomes the double-refined curse of God upon His creatures.

Free labor has the inspiration of hope; pure slavery has no hope. The power of hope upon human exertion and happiness is wonderful. The slave master himself has a conception of it, and hence the system of tasks among slaves. The slave whom you cannot drive with the lash to break seventy-five pounds of hemp in a day, if you will task him to break a hundred and promise him pay for all he does over, he will break you a hundred and fifty. You have substituted hope for the rod. And yet perhaps it does not occur to you that to the extent of your gain in the case, you have given up the slave system and adopted the free system of labor.

When Senator Douglas returned to make his public defense of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, Lincoln was ready. Douglas spoke in Springfield at the annual state fair on October 3, 1854; Lincoln answered him the next day. It was in this speech that Lincoln

first emerged as a really great orator. Old friends who had known him for twenty years or more, and had often heard him speak, felt the change in him. He spoke as if with the voice of prophecy. At times he spoke at white heat, and fairly quivered with emotion. This first speech was not preserved, but it must have been practically the same as his great speech twelve days later, October 16, at Peoria, where he again replied to Douglas. This Peoria speech has come down to us in exact manuscript form and stands as Lincoln's great original utterance on the subject of slavery with relation to the territories. He denounced slavery as the only thing that ever endangered the Union. He saw in the Kansas-Nebraska Act a disguised attempt to force the spread of slavery, and he pierced the veil of hypocrisy that surrounded the whole system:

> This declared indifference but, as I must think, covert zeal for the spread of slavery, I cannot but hate. I hate it because of the monstrous injustice of slavery itself. I hate it because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world; enables the enemies of free institutions with plausibility to taunt us as hypocrites; causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity; and especially because it forces so many really good men among ourselves into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty.

He showed the fallacy of slavery in a democracy:

> If the negro is a man, is it not to that extent a total destruction of self-government to say that he too shall not govern himself? When the white man governs himself and also governs another man, that is more than self-government — that is despotism. If the negro is a man,

then my ancient faith teaches me that all men are created equal, and that there can be no moral right in one man making a slave of another.

And he predicted the overthrow of the sacred right of self-government itself through development of this system:

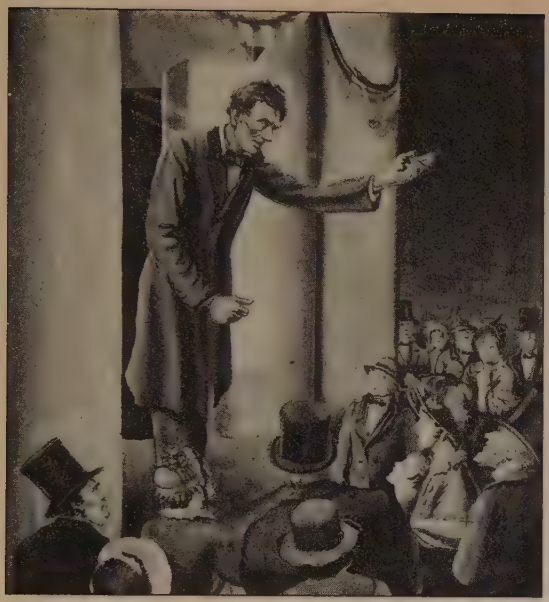
Little by little, but steadily as man's march to the grave, we have been giving up the old for the new faith. Near eighty years ago we began by declaring that all men are created equal; but now from that beginning we have run down to the other declaration that for some men to enslave others is a "sacred right of self-government." These principles cannot stand together. They are as opposite as God and mammon.

. . . . . .

In our greedy chase to make profit of the negro, let us beware lest we cancel and tear in pieces even the white man's charter of freedom. Our republican robe is soiled and trailed in the dust. Let us turn and wash it white in the spirit, if not the blood, of the Revolution. Let us turn slavery from its claims of "moral right" back upon its existing legal rights and its argument of "necessity."

He showed the inherent wrong of slavery:

Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature; opposition to it, in his love of justice. These principles are in eternal antagonism; and when brought into collision so fiercely as slavery extension brings them, shocks and throes and convulsions must ceaselessly follow. Repeal the Missouri Compromise — repeal all compromise — repeal the Declaration of Independence — repeal all past history, you still cannot repeal human nature. It still will be out of the abundance of man's heart that he will declare slavery is wrong; and out of the abundance of his mouth he will continue to speak.



Edward J. Jacob, Peoria

Lincoln speaking on the steps of the old courthouse at Peoria, Illinois, on the night of 16 October, 1854. Engraving from a painting by Charles Overall.

But he was not yet ready to join with the abolitionists, although he did not fear to be thrown into their company. He did not even ask the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law. He only asked that the Missouri Compromise be restored and that the spread of slavery be arrested:

Some men, mostly Whigs, who condemn the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, nevertheless hesitate to go for its restoration lest they be thrown in company with the abolitionists. Will they allow me as an old Whig to tell them good-humoredly that I think this is very silly? Stand with anybody that stands right. Stand with him while he is right and part with him when he goes wrong.

Stand with the abolitionist in restoring the Missouri Compromise, and stand against him when he attempts to repeal the Fugitive Slave Law. In the latter case you stand with the Southern disunionist. What of that? You are still right. In both cases you are right. In both you stand on middle ground and hold the ship level and steady. In both you are national, and nothing less than national. This is the good old Whig ground. To desert such ground because of any company is to be less than a Whig — less than a man — less than an American.

He continued speech after speech along this line, gradually growing more and more insistent that slavery must not be permitted to spread. In his famous speech before the first Illinois Republican state convention at Bloomington, May 29, 1856 — known as the "Lost Speech" because no complete manuscript of it has ever been preserved — he said:

Slavery must be kept out of Kansas! The test — the pinch — is right there. If we lose Kansas to freedom, an example will be set which will prove fatal to freedom in the end. We, therefore, in the language of the Bible, must "lay the ax to the root of the tree." Temporizing will not do longer; now is the time for decision — for firm, persistent, resolute action.

His most positive pronouncement came in the famous "House-Divided-against-Itself Speech" upon his nomination as a candidate for the United States Senate at Springfield, June 17, 1858. In clarion tones he heralded the irrepressible conflict:

A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved; I do not expect the house to fall, but I do expect that it will cease to be divided, it will become all one thing or all the other.

Most of his political advisers warned him against what they considered this radical declaration, but it embodied his deepest conviction. "It is a truth proved by six thousand years of human experience," he said. Only the faithful Herndon approved it. "Deliver that speech as read," Herndon said, "and it will make you President." From that time forth the sentiment of that speech was made the basis for the slavery extension contest.

Throughout the senatorial campaign of 1858 and especially in his debates with Douglas, Lincoln reiterated again and again in an ever clearer and more positive way the views which he had already expressed in regard to slavery. He explained in a graphic way the logic of his position in being willing to leave slavery alone where it then existed, while at the same time he vigorously opposed its extension into new territory:

> If I saw a venomous snake crawling in the road, any man would say I might seize the nearest stick and kill it; but if I found that snake in bed with my children, that would be another question. I might hurt the children more than the snake. Much more, if I found it in bed with my neighbor's children, and I had bound myself by a solemn compact not to meddle with his children under any circumstances. But if there was a bed newly made up, to which the children were to be taken, and it was proposed to take a batch of snakes and put them there with the children, I take it no man would say there was any question how I ought to decide.

The last of the Lincoln-Douglas debates was held on October 15, 1858, at Alton, the place where twenty-one years before the abolitionist editor,

Lovejoy, had been murdered by a pro-slavery mob. Here Lincoln expressed himself with unusual spirit:

> Is slavery wrong? That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles — right and wrong — throughout the world. They are two principles that have stood face to face from the beginning of time and will ever continue to struggle. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same principle in whatever shape it develops itself. It is the same spirit that says: "You work and toil and earn bread, and I'll eat it."

Here, also, he was most emphatic in his view that slavery threatened the very Union itself, together with the liberty and prosperity of all:

> Has anything ever threatened the existence of the Union save and except this very institution of slavery? What is it that we hold most dear among us? Our own liberty and prosperity. What has ever threatened our liberty and prosperity except this institution of slavery? If this is true, how do you propose to improve things by enlarging slavery? By spreading it out and making it bigger? That is no proper way of treating what you regard as wrong!

His hatred of slavery was increasing, but notwithstanding this he never lost sight of what he considered the greater issue of the safety of the Union. Concerning this he frequently expressed himself as follows:

> Much as I hate slavery, I would consent to the extension of it rather than see the Union dissolved, just as I would consent to any great evil to avoid a greater one.

He was dealing with the situation as it was. The immediate issue was: Should slavery be extended? He confined himself rigidly to stalwart opposition to extension, and to this alone; but he became ever more deeply confirmed in this position on the ground that slavery was morally wrong. He gave this view to the nation in his famous address at Cooper Institute at New York, February 27, 1860. This statement has been quoted in part earlier in this book but deserves to be repeated here:

> If slavery is right, all words, acts, laws, and constitutions against it are themselves wrong and should be silenced and swept away. If it is right, we cannot justly object to its nationality — its universality; if it is wrong, they cannot justly insist upon its extension — its enlargement. All they ask we could readily grant, if we thought slavery right; all we ask they could as readily grant, if they thought it wrong. Their thinking it right and our thinking it wrong is the precise fact upon which depends the whole controversy. Thinking it right as they do, they are not to blame for desiring its full recognition as being right; but thinking it wrong as we do, can we yield to them? Can we cast our votes with their view and against our own? In view of our moral, social, and political responsibilities, can we do this?
>
> Wrong as we think slavery is, we can yet afford to let it alone where it is, because that much is due to the necessity arising from its actual presence in the nation; but can we, while our votes will prevent it, allow it to spread into the national territories and to overrun us here in these free states? If our sense of duty forbids this, then let us stand by our duty fearlessly and effectively.

When secession came, shortly after his election as President, he made clear in his inaugural address

that he did not intend to interfere with slavery in the states where it existed:

> Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern states that by the accession of a Republican administration their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There never has been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches when I declare that "I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the states where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so." Those who nominated and elected me did so with full knowledge that I had made this and many similar declarations, and had never recanted them. . . . I now reiterate these sentiments.

The issue before him, then, was the preservation of the Union. When he first took the President's office, he seems to have been far from ready to consider giving immediate freedom to all the slaves. But he was ready to do more than merely restrain slavery where it was. He wanted to prevail upon the border states to free their slaves and thus increase the extent of free territory. He had deep concern always for the support of the border states of Kentucky, Missouri, and Maryland, in which slavery existed. On September 22, 1861, he wrote: "I think to lose Kentucky is nearly the same as to lose the whole game. Kentucky gone, we cannot hold Missouri, nor, do I think, Maryland." He held frequent conferences with representatives of these states, in which he earnestly urged them to

join with him in some form of compensated emancipation. He wanted to bring about emancipation gradually. He signed the bill which Congress passed in 1862 to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia, but he was not enthusiastic about it. This measure appropriated one million dollars to compensate the loyal slaveholders of the District, and set aside one hundred thousand dollars for the purpose of transporting those negroes who wished to go to Haiti or Liberia. This move definitely committed the administration to compensated emancipation.

He did not approve early attempts at military emancipation such as were first attempted by General Frémont. Later General Hunter, as commander of the Department of the South, declared all slaves in Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina forever free. This action was taken by General Hunter without consulting the President, and when it first came to Lincoln's knowledge through the newspapers, he promptly pronounced it void and of no effect. He revoked Hunter's order, and in the official revocation he made it clear that he carefully reserved all power of freeing slaves to himself:

> I further make known that, whether it be competent for me, as commander-in-chief of the army and navy, to declare the slaves of any state or states free, and whether, at any time, in any case, it shall have become a necessity indispensable to the maintenance of the government to exercise such supposed power are questions which, under my responsibility, I reserve to myself, and which I cannot feel justified in leaving to the decision of commanders in the field.

And again he made a pathetic appeal to the border states to coöperate in some plan for buying and freeing the slaves:

> I do not argue — I beseech you to make arguments for yourself. You cannot, if you would, be blind to the signs of the times. I beg of you a calm and enlarged consideration of them, ranging, if it may be, far above personal and partisan politics. This proposal makes common cause for a common object, casting no reproaches upon any. It acts not the Pharisee. The change it contemplates would come gently as the dews of heaven, not rending or wrecking anything. Will you not embrace it? So much good has not been done, by one effort, in all past time, as in the providence of God it is now your high privilege to do. May the vast future not have to lament that you have neglected it.

In the meantime the demand for absolute emancipation was growing, even among most of the President's friends and supporters. The President himself was moving rapidly toward this necessity, but he was not willing to be rushed. He gave a listening ear to delegation after delegation that appealed to him for immediate emancipation. All the while he was keeping his own counsel, and all the time he was steadily preparing for emancipation as a military necessity. Shortly after his last appeal to the border states, he read to his Cabinet, on July 22, 1862, a tentative proclamation to be effective January 1, 1863. The matter was discussed at length, and upon the suggestion of Secretary Seward it was decided to withhold the proclamation until some encouraging military success was achieved. So the President decided to defer it. All the while

he was touching up its form and "anxiously waiting the progress of events."

It was in the midst of this preparation for the proclamation that he wrote his famous answer on August 23, 1862, to the bitter complaint, entitled "The Prayer of Twenty Millions," which Horace Greeley had addressed to him in the *New York Tribune* of August 20. The President wrote:

As to the policy I "seem to be pursuing," as you say, I have not meant to leave any one in doubt.

I would save the Union. I would save it the shortest way under the Constitution. The sooner the national authority can be restored, the nearer the Union will be "the Union as it was." If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time save slavery, I do not agree with them. If there be those who would not save the Union unless they could at the same time destroy slavery, I do not agree with them. My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do that. What I do about slavery and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do not believe it would help to save the Union. I shall do less whenever I shall believe what I am doing hurts the cause, and I shall do more whenever I shall believe doing more will help the cause. I shall try to correct errors when shown to be errors, and I shall adopt new views so fast as they shall appear to be true views. I have here stated my purpose according to my view of official duty, and I intend no modification of my oft-expressed personal wish that all men, everywhere, could be free.

This document will ever stand as one of the most famous official utterances in history, both for its form and substance. The reader who studies this incisive statement of the President's intention to save the Union regardless of slavery should remember always that at that very time he had in hand the Emancipation Proclamation already prepared. During that same period he answered in a characteristic way a great committee from the religious denominations of Chicago, who came to him on September 13, 1862, pleading that it was the will of God that he should immediately free the slaves:

> I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say that if it is probable that God would reveal His will to others on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed He would reveal it directly to me; for unless I am more deceived in myself than I often am, it is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. And if I can learn what it is, I will do it. These are not, however, the days of miracles, and I suppose it will be granted that I am not to expect a direct revelation. I must study the plain physical facts of the case, ascertain what is possible, and learn what appears to be wise and right.

He remarked afterward to some of his friends that he thought it a little strange that "the revelation of the will of God should come to him in a roundabout way through the wicked city of Chicago." He was at that very time practically decided to free the slaves. But he dreaded it deeply, fearing that it was dictatorial and might be hurtful. In the very language of Christ, he had prayed to the Almighty to save him from this necessity: "If it be possible,

let this cup pass from me." Thoughtfully and conservatively, he later answered the delegates:

What good would a proclamation of emancipation from me do, especially as we are now situated? I do not want to issue a document that the whole world will see must necessarily be inoperative, like the pope's bull against the comet. Would my word free the slaves, when I cannot even enforce the Constitution in the rebel states? Is there a single court, or magistrate, or individual that would be influenced by it there? And what reason is there to think it would have any greater effect upon the slaves than the late law of Congress, which I approved, and which offers protection and freedom to the slaves of rebel masters who come within our lines? Yet I cannot learn that that law has caused a single slave to come over to us. And suppose they could be induced by a proclamation of freedom from me to throw themselves upon us, what should we do with them? How can we feed and care for such a multitude? If we were to arm them, I fear that in a few weeks the arms would be in the hands of the rebels; and indeed, thus far we have not had arms enough to equip our white troops. I will mention another thing, though it meets only your scorn and contempt. There are fifty thousand bayonets in the Union armies from the border slave states. It would be a serious matter if, in consequence of a proclamation such as you desire, they should go over to the rebels.

Four days later, September 17, 1862, the long-awaited victory came to the Union arms in the battle of Antietam. Lee was defeated and driven out of Maryland. So Lincoln immediately left the soldiers' home where he was resting when the news of the victory reached him, finished the second draft of the Emancipation Proclamation, and called the Cabinet together to consider it on Monday, September 22.

The President opened the meeting by reading a humorous selection from Artemus Ward, after which he laid down the little volume and took a "graver tone." Secretary Chase recorded in his diary an exact report of the President's words:

When the rebel army was at Frederick, I determined, as soon as it should be driven out of Maryland, to issue a proclamation of emancipation, such as I thought most likely to be useful. I said nothing to any one, but I made the promise to myself and (hesitating a little) to my Maker. The rebel army is now driven out, and I am going to fulfill that promise. I have got you together to hear what I have written down. I do not wish your advice about the main matter, for that I have determined for myself. . . . I know very well that many others might, in this matter as in others, do better than I can; and if I was satisfied that the public confidence was more fully possessed by any one of them than by me, and knew of any constitutional way in which he could be put in my place, he should have it. I would gladly yield it to him. But, though I believe that I have not so much of the confidence of the people as I had some time since, I do not know that, all things considered, any other person has more; and, however this may be, there is no way in which I can have any other man put where I am. I am here; I must do the best I can, and bear the responsibility of taking the course which I feel I ought to take.

So the proclamation was issued and appeared in the newspapers the following morning, September 23, 1862. It differed very slightly from the original draft of July 22. It declared in substance that all persons held to slavery in all parts of the nation that should be in a state of rebellion on January 1, 1863, would be set at liberty and that the government would recognize and maintain their freedom. The

President took this step upon positive conviction, but he was deeply troubled as to its immediate

Brady

President Lincoln with his son Tad. Tad died when he was seventeen years old, eight years after his father's death.

results. He said to a party of enthusiastic abolitionists who serenaded him the following night, "I can only trust in God that I have made no mistake."

The proclamation was not received with universal approval throughout the North. It was bitterly criticized and condemned from many sources. Among

the soldiers in the field there was much grumbling. Many of them said they had not shouldered muskets to fight for the blacks. The fall elections of 1862 went against the President's party in many states, particularly in Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and New York. As the time approached to put the Proclamation into effect, it became a serious question in the minds of many people as to whether or not the President would dare fulfill his promise. But there is no evidence that Lincoln ever wavered. He said, "I am a slow walker, but I never walk back." When Congress convened on December 1, he submitted the Proclamation and suggested a plan of compensated emancipation. He argued that peaceful emancipation according to this plan would "end the struggle and save the Union forever." "Without slavery the rebellion could never have existed — without slavery it could not continue. Emancipation by this plan would cost no blood at all." He pleaded for its adoption most earnestly in a long and thoughtful message which concluded with this ringing appeal:

> Fellow-citizens, we cannot escape history. We of this Congress and this administration will be remembered in spite of ourselves. No personal significance, or insignificance, can spare one or another of us. The fiery trial through which we pass will light us down, in honor or dishonor, to the latest generation. We say we are for the Union. The world will not forget that we say this. We know how to save the Union. The world knows we do know how to save it. We — even we here — hold power and bear the responsibility. In giving freedom to the slave, we assure freedom to the free — honorable alike

in what we give and what we preserve. We shall nobly save, or meanly lose, the last, best hope of earth. Other means may succeed, this could not fail. The way is plain, peaceful, generous, just — a way which, if followed, the world will forever applaud, and God must forever bless.

But his plan did not prevail in Congress; so on January 1, 1863, just one hundred days after his official promise had been made, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A PROCLAMATION

Whereas on the twenty-second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-two, a proclamation was issued by the President of the United States, containing, among other things, the following; to wit:

"That on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, all persons held as slaves within any State, or designated part of a State, the people whereof shall then be in rebellion against the United States, shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free; and the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authority thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of such persons, and will do no act or acts to repress such persons, or any of them, in any efforts they may make for their actual freedom.

"That the Executive will, on the first day of January aforesaid, by proclamation, designate the States and parts of States, if any, in which the people thereof respectively shall then be in rebellion against the United States; and the fact that any State, or the people thereof, shall on that day be in good faith represented in the Congress of the United States by members chosen thereto at elections

wherein a majority of the qualified voters of such State shall have participated, shall, in the absence of strong countervailing testimony, be deemed conclusive evidence that such State and the people thereof are not then in rebellion against the United States."

Now, therefore, I, Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States, by virtue of the power in me vested as commander-in-chief of the army and navy of the United States, in time of actual armed rebellion against the authority and government of the United States, and as a fit and necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion, do, on this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three, and in accordance with my purpose so to do, publicly proclaimed for the full period of one hundred days from the day first above mentioned, order and designate as the States and parts of States wherein the people thereof, respectively, are this day in rebellion against the United States, the following; to wit:

Arkansas, Texas, Louisiana (except the parishes of St. Bernard, Plaquemines, Jefferson, St. John, St. Charles, St. James, Ascension, Assumption, Terre Bonne, Lafourche, St. Mary, St. Martin, and Orleans, including the city of New Orleans), Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Virginia (except the forty-eight counties designated as West Virginia, and also the counties of Berkeley, Accomac, Northampton, Elizabeth City, York, Princess Anne, and Norfolk, including the cities of Norfolk and Portsmouth), and which excepted parts are for the present left precisely as if this proclamation were not issued.

And by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as slaves within said designated States and parts of States are, and henceforward shall be, free; and that the executive government of the United States, including the military and naval authorities thereof, will recognize and maintain the freedom of said persons.

And I hereby enjoin upon the people so declared to be free to abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defense; and I recommend to them that, in all cases when allowed, they labor faithfully for reasonable wages.

And I further declare and make known that such persons of suitable condition will be received into the armed service of the United States to garrison forts, positions, stations, and other places, and to man vessels of all sorts in said service.

And upon this act, sincerely believed to be an act of justice, warranted by the Constitution upon military necessity, I invoke the considerate judgment of mankind and the gracious favor of Almighty God.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed.

Done at the city of Washington, this first day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand
L. S. eight hundred and sixty-three, and of the independence of the United States of America the eighty-seventh.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

BY THE PRESIDENT:
WILLIAM H. SEWARD,
Secretary of State

Lincoln said, "I never in my life felt more certain that I was doing right than I do in signing this paper." It is probable that no civil or military ruler had ever assumed such a stupendous responsibility before, and no one knew this better than he. He had chosen what he thought to be the only course by which he could save the Constitution and the Union. He explained later:

I felt that measures otherwise unconstitutional might become lawful by becoming indispensable to the preservation of the Constitution, through the preservation of the nation. Right or wrong, I assumed this ground and now

avow it. I could not feel that, to the best of my ability, I had even tried to preserve the Constitution if, to save slavery or any minor matter, I should permit the wreck of government, country, and Constitution all together. When, early in the war, General Frémont attempted military emancipation, I forbade it, because I did not then think it an indispensable necessity. When, a little later, General Cameron, then Secretary of War, suggested the arming of the blacks, I objected because I did not yet think it an indispensable necessity. When, still later, General Hunter attempted military emancipation, I again forbade it, because I did not yet think the indispensable necessity had come. When in March and May and July, 1862, I made earnest and successive appeals to the border states to favor compensated emancipation, I believed the indispensable necessity for military emancipation and arming the blacks would come unless averted by that measure. They declined the proposition, and I was, in my best judgment, driven to the alternative of either surrendering the Union, and with it the Constitution, or of laying strong hand upon the colored element. I chose the latter.

In the face of all the discouragements that followed, he stood by this action firm as a rock. He felt that the very logic of fate was with him. He said: "I claim not to have controlled events, but confess plainly that events have controlled me." In his first message to Congress, after his reëlection in the fall of 1864, when the suggestion was being made that perhaps peace and union could now be brought about by the restoration of slavery, he closed that subject forever with these positive words:

I repeat the declaration made a year ago, that while I remain in my present position I shall not attempt to retract or modify the Emancipation Proclamation, nor shall I

return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that proclamation or by any of the acts of Congress. If the people should, by whatever mode or means, make it an executive duty to reënslave such persons, another, and not I, must be their instrument to perform it.

Thus the cause of the Union was linked by the act of the Commander-in-Chief of the army and navy with a great moral principle. This had a profound effect upon the attitude of foreign nations toward the war.

Lincoln followed the proclamation right into the Constitution and personally directed the passage of the resolution in Congress which finally resulted in the permanent prohibition of slavery, regardless of the result of the Civil War. When this resolution was finally passed on January 31, 1865, assuring the adoption of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, he said with profound thankfulness, "This finishes the job."

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

COMMANDER

History holds no greater irony than that Abraham Lincoln should have been a war President. He was the kindest, most gentle man that ever occupied the White House; yet by circumstances he was forced to conduct the most cruel war in American history. The irony is made perfect by the fact that he had to fight against a people whom he loved — a section from which he had sprung.

It was clear from the very first that Lincoln's election meant disunion. It was equally clear to all farseeing Americans that an attempt at disunion meant war. Secession began before Lincoln assumed office. His inaugural address made it clear that he considered the Union unbroken and that he intended to do his duty by faithfully executing the laws of the Union in all the states. He said to the South: "You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors." The war was begun by the secessionists when they attacked the right of the President "to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government."

Fort Sumter was located on a little island in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. The fort was in need of supplies, and on January 9, 1861, two months before Lincoln's inauguration, a vessel, the *Star of the West*, attempting to supply the fort, was fired upon by the South Carolinians and turned back.

When Lincoln became President, he notified the Governor of South Carolina that he intended to

provide the garrison with food. Then the Confederate authorities demanded the surrender of the fort; and when Major Robert Anderson, who commanded it, refused to surrender, they began bombardment on April 12, 1861. The war had begun. On April 14 the fort was abandoned and the garrison sailed for New York. There had been no loss of life. The next day, April 15, President Lincoln issued a call for 75,000 volunteers. Within a short time Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, and Tennessee joined the seven states that had already seceded. The seat of government of the Confederacy was moved from Montgomery, Alabama, to Richmond, Virginia.

It is not the purpose of this brief biography to recite the story of the Civil War further than to suggest some of Abraham Lincoln's part in it. This can be suggested only in a few spots, for a recital of all President Lincoln's connection with the war would embody a complete story of that awful struggle.

Napoleon said, "In war it is not the men that count; it is the man." Abraham Lincoln was "the man" in our Civil War. Around him revolved cabinets and congresses, generals and armies, parties and factions, policies and plots, states and sections, for more than four years — from the hour of his first inauguration to the hour of his death, from the beginning to the end of the war.

Some of Lincoln's greatest problems were within his own official family. His first Cabinet had been chosen largely for him as a result of the campaign in which he was nominated and elected. Seward, Chase,

Cameron, and Bates were the leading candidates against him for the nomination. Seward became Secretary of State; Chase, Secretary of the Treasury; Cameron, Secretary of War; and Bates,

William H. Seward. Engraving from a photograph by Brady.

Attorney General. These were able men and possessed a vast influence. Choosing a Cabinet from among the President's leading rivals was perhaps a good way to get a strong Cabinet but hardly a harmonious one. All these men regarded themselves as superior to the President, upon whom they looked as a country lawyer and a lucky politician. Their

training and experience were greatly superior to his. Seward in particular felt that the responsibility of conducting the government in the great crisis that confronted the administration devolved upon him. And he took little pains to conceal his views about this. Less than a month after the inauguration, in fact on April 1, 1861, he gave his views to the President in the following memorandum:

MEMORANDUM FROM SECRETARY SEWARD

SOME THOUGHTS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CONSIDERATION

April 1, 1861

First. We are at the end of a month's administration, and yet without a policy either domestic or foreign.

Second. This, however, is not culpable, and it has even been unavoidable. The presence of the Senate, with the need to meet applications for patronage, have prevented attention to other and more grave matters.

Third. But further delay to adopt and prosecute our policies for both domestic and foreign affairs would not only bring scandal on the administration, but danger upon the country.

Fourth. To do this we must dismiss the applicants for office. But how? I suggest that we make the local appointments forthwith, leaving foreign or general ones for ulterior and occasional action.

Fifth. The policy at home. I am aware that my views are singular, and perhaps not sufficiently explained. My system is built upon this idea as a ruling one; namely, that we must

CHANGE THE QUESTION BEFORE THE PUBLIC FROM ONE UPON SLAVERY, OR ABOUT SLAVERY, for a question upon UNION OR DISUNION:

In other words, from what would be regarded as a party question to one of patriotism or union.

The occupation or evacuation of Fort Sumter, although not in fact a slavery or a party question, is so regarded. Witness the temper manifested by the Republicans in the free states, and even by the Union men in the South.

I would therefore terminate it as a safe means for changing the issue. I deem it fortunate that the last administration created the necessity.

For the rest, I would simultaneously defend and reinforce all the ports in the gulf, and have the navy recalled from foreign stations to be prepared for a blockade. Put the island of Key West under martial law.

This will raise distinctly the question of union or disunion. I would maintain every fort and possession in the South.

For Foreign Nations

I would demand explanations from Spain and France, categorically, at once.

I would seek explanations from Great Britain and Russia, and send agents into Canada, Mexico, and Central America to rouse a vigorous continental spirit of independence on this continent against European intervention.

And, if satisfactory explanations are not received from Spain and France,

Would convene Congress and declare war against them.

But whatever policy we adopt, there must be an energetic prosecution of it.

For this purpose it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct it incessantly.

Either the President must do it himself, and be all the while active in it, or devolve it on some member of his Cabinet. Once adopted, debates on it must end, and all agree and abide. It is not in my especial province; but I neither seek to evade nor assume responsibility.

He had not been asked to submit his views; they were wholly voluntary. When Lincoln read this

note, he was seen to throw up his hands and mutter aloud: "One war at a time; one war at a time!" Seward had scarcely taken the trouble to use diplomatic language in telling the President that up to date he was a failure and that he ought to turn his responsibilities over to his Secretary of State, who already had a program fully formed in his mind.

This remarkable proposal received an immediate answer as follows:

REPLY TO SECRETARY SEWARD'S MEMORANDUM

EXECUTIVE MANSION, *April* 1, 1861

HON. W. H. SEWARD

MY DEAR SIR: Since parting with you I have been considering your paper dated this day and entitled "Some Thoughts for the President's Consideration." The first proposition in it is, "First. We are at the end of a month's administration, and yet without a policy either domestic or foreign."

At the beginning of that month, in the inaugural, I said: "The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the government, and to collect the duties and imposts." This had your distinct approval at the time, and, taken in connection with the order I immediately gave General Scott, directing him to employ every means in his power to strengthen and hold the forts, comprises the exact domestic policy you now urge, with the single exception that it does not propose to abandon Fort Sumter.

Again, I do not perceive how the reinforcement of Fort Sumter would be done on a slavery or a party issue while that of Fort Pickens would be on a more national and patriotic one.

The news received yesterday in regard to St. Domingo certainly brings a new item within the range of our foreign

policy; but up to that time we have been preparing circulars and instructions to ministers and the like, all in perfect harmony, without even a suggestion that we had no foreign policy.

Upon your closing propositions — that "whatever policy we adopt, there must be an energetic prosecution of it.

"For this purpose it must be somebody's business to pursue and direct incessantly.

"Either the President must do it himself, and be all the while active in it, or devolve it on some member of his Cabinet. Once adopted, debates on it must end, and all agree and abide" — I remark that if this must be done, I must do it. When a general line of policy is adopted, I apprehend there is no danger of its being changed without good reason, or continuing to be a subject of unnecessary debate; still, upon points arising in its progress I wish, and suppose I am entitled to have, the advice of all the Cabinet.

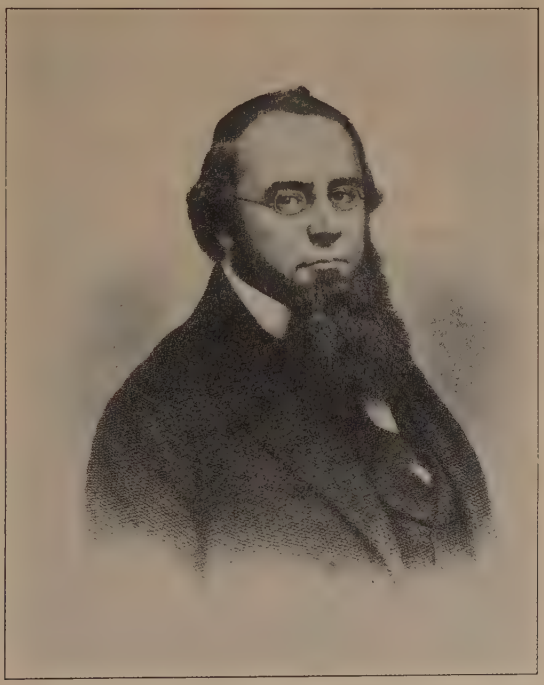
Your obedient servant,
A. Lincoln

Thus in mild language Lincoln told his Secretary of State that he himself was President, that he was pursuing a policy, and that he intended to have "the advice of all the Cabinet." It should be said to the credit of Seward that he quickly found his place and it was not long after this that he said "the President is the best of us."

Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury, however, never seemed to yield the opinion that he should have been President instead of Lincoln, and he continued to aspire to that position even to the point of personal and political disloyalty. But he was a very able Secretary of the Treasury. He knew how to raise money. So Lincoln held and controlled him

until near the end of the war and then appointed him Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

Simon Cameron, who was appointed Secretary of War, became so involved in scandals over war contracts that before the end of the first year the President accepted his resignation and appointed him minister to Russia. In his place Lincoln chose a most efficient but troublesome man — Edwin M. Stanton. Stanton had shown great energy and ability as Secretary of War in the closing months of Buchanan's administration. He was a genuine



Edwin M. Stanton. Engraving from a photograph.

patriot and loyal to the Union; but he was opposed to Lincoln politically and did not like him personally. He had treated Lincoln shabbily as a fellow lawyer in the McCormick Case mentioned in another chapter. It seems that he had never changed his opinion of the backwoods lawyer, and even after he was given a Cabinet appointment he was unsparing in his criticism of the administration.

After Bull Run he wrote to ex-President Buchanan:

> The imbecility of this administration culminated in that catastrophe; an irretrievable misfortune and national disgrace, never to be forgotten, are to be added to the ruin of all peaceful pursuits and national bankruptcy as the result of Lincoln's "running the machine" for five months.

McClellan said of Stanton's attitude in the fall of 1861:

> The most disagreeable thing about him was the extreme virulence with which he abused the President, the administration, and the Republican party. He carried this to such an extent that I was often shocked by it. He never spoke of the President in any other way than as the "original gorilla," and often said that DuChaillu [1] was a fool to wander all the way to Africa in search of what he could so easily have found at Springfield, Illinois. Nothing could have been more bitter than his words and manner always were when speaking of the administration and the Republican party. He never gave them credit for honesty or patriotism, and very seldom for any ability.

Lincoln knew all this; yet he appointed Stanton

[1] A noted traveler and anthropologist, who lived from 1835–1903. He made several exploratory trips to Africa, during which he saw numbers of gorillas. These animals had up to that time been known to scientists only by a few skeletons.

Secretary of War after Cameron's resignation, January 14, 1862, because he thought he was the best man for the place. And Stanton did his work well; although he actually flouted his chief on many occasions and frequently tried to override him. Lincoln yielded to him often in minor matters; but in the end it was the President who was always master. He held all the members of his unruly Cabinet with a kind but masterful hand. Even Stanton finally became friendly to him and was faithful to the end; it was he who really took charge of the government for the first few turbulent days after the death of Lincoln.

But if Lincoln's difficulties with his Cabinet were bad, his troubles with the army were worse. The trouble was not with the enlisted men, but with the generals.

The Army of the United States was poorly organized before the war, and of course secession disorganized it further. Many of the best generals went with the South. General Winfield Scott, the commander-in-chief, was old and feeble, and had no heart in the war. He did not want to assume the responsibilities that the war thrust upon him. After a few months of half-hearted effort he resigned his position on November 1, 1861, and General George B. McClellan was given command of the Army of the Potomac. This was the highest post in the principal arena of the war. McClellan was young and ambitious; he looked upon himself as a young Napoleon. Of his first reception in Washington he wrote in *McClellan's Own Story:*

I find myself in a new and strange position here, . . . President, Cabinet, General Scott, and all, deferring to me. By some strange operation of magic I seem to have become the power of the land. . . . I went to the Senate and was quite overwhelmed by the congratulations I received and the respect with which I was treated. . . . They give me my way in everything, full swing and unbounded confidence.

Brady

General George B. McClellan. From a war-time photograph.

No man was ever given a finer opportunity than McClellan, and for a time he seemed to justify the trust. He was a splendid drill master and organizer, but he was not a fighter. He was never ready to fight. He seemed to think always that the Southern

army was many times the size it was. He kept wanting more men, and when he got them he did nothing with them except drill them. He was very conceited and was unwilling that the Secretary of War or even the President should direct or advise him.

The slogan of the North was "On to Richmond"; of the South, "On to Washington." There was every reason to think that a decisive battle then and there could end the war; and it was Lincoln's intention that such a battle should be fought.

Although Lincoln kept in the closest touch with the army at all times, he gave McClellan a free hand. He urged the quickest possible action. But McClellan did not act, except to intrench more deeply or retire. While Lee threatened Washington, the Union Army was getting no nearer Richmond. As Lincoln and Stanton became more urgent that McClellan should attack, he became more disrespectful to them. He actually snubbed the President on more than one occasion, so that newspaper correspondents commented on his discourtesy. Lincoln bore all this with patience. He said, "I will hold McClellan's horse, if he will only bring us success." The country grew terribly dissatisfied, and there was much demand for McClellan's removal.

After months of weary waiting for McClellan to move, Lincoln removed him and placed General John Pope in charge. Pope started out with some promise and a great deal of bluster, but he suffered a terrible defeat at Manassas, the second battle of Bull Run, on August 29 and 30, 1862. After this, McClellan was restored to the command of the Army of the Potomac.

Lee was then invading Maryland, and McClellan, after great urging by the President, attacked him at Antietam on September 17, 1862, and drove him out of Maryland. But he failed to follow up his victory, and let Lee escape at a time when the war might have been ended by persistent fighting.

An example of the President's insistence and the General's delay is found in the following characteristic communication of Lincoln to McClellan before he first removed him:

> Once more let me tell you it is indispensable to you that you should strike a blow. I am powerless to help this. You will do me the justice to remember I always insisted that going down the bay in search of a field, instead of fighting at or near Manassas, was only shifting and not surmounting a difficulty; that we would find the same enemy and the same or equal intrenchments at either place. The country will not fail to note — is noting now — that the present hesitation to move upon an intrenched enemy is but the story of Manassas repeated.
>
> I beg to assure you that I have never written you or spoken to you in greater kindness of feeling than now, nor with a fuller purpose to sustain you, so far as in my most anxious judgment I consistently can; but you must act.

The President made many requests like this, but McClellan was not the one to strike a decisive blow; so Lincoln removed him permanently. It may be said here that "Little Mac," as he was called, was always popular with the soldiers, and there is a difference of opinion even to this day as to whether he was justly treated; but impartial history must record that the President exercised almost unlimited patience and forbearance in order to give him a fair trial.

He put in McClellan's place General Ambrose E. Burnside, who was defeated at Fredericksburg, with frightful loss, on December 13, 1862.

Lincoln made a very deep study of military science. He did everything he could to master this subject, just as he had mastered his old blue-back speller. No officer in the field gave more study than he to military manuals, maps, and charts. He visited the camps frequently to survey the very ground of action. He sought information and advice wherever he could get it. His principal military authority was the treatise of General Henry Wager Halleck, whom he kept in a swivel chair at Washington as his principal adviser and general-in-chief.

But Halleck proved to be more facile with the pen than with the sword. In the dilemma that faced the government after Fredericksburg, Lincoln needed expert advice more than ever before. The army was discouraged and the corps of commanders was disaffected. The President doubted the wisdom of a new move that Burnside planned, and he submitted the question to Halleck. But Halleck refused to accept the responsibilities of his position in this crisis and would not give a decision. Lincoln's disappointment was expressed in writing:

> If in such a difficulty as this you do not help, you fail me precisely in the point for which I sought your assistance. You know what General Burnside's plan is, and it is my wish that you go with him to the ground, examine it as far as practicable, confer with the officers, getting their judgment and ascertaining their temper — in a word, gather all the elements for forming a judgment of your own, and then tell General Burnside that you do

approve or that you do not approve his plan. Your military skill is useless to me if you will not do this.

Lincoln solved the problem by displacing Burnside and appointing General Joseph Hooker. Hooker is chiefly remembered because of the letter Lincoln wrote him on January 26, 1863.

GENERAL: I have placed you at the head of the Army of the Potomac. Of course I have done this upon what appear to me to be sufficient reasons, and yet I think it best for you to know that there are some things in regard to which I am not quite satisfied with you. I believe you to be a brave and skillful soldier, which of course I like. I also believe you do not mix politics with your profession, in which you are right. You have confidence in yourself, which is a valuable if not an indispensable quality. You are ambitious, which, within reasonable bounds, does good rather than harm; but I think that during General Burnside's command of the army you have taken counsel of your ambition and thwarted him as much as you could, in which you did a great wrong to the country and to a most meritorious and honorable brother officer. I have heard, in such a way as to believe it, of your recently saying that both the army and the government needed a dictator. Of course it was not for this, but in spite of it, that I have given you the command. Only those generals who gain successes can set up dictators. What I now ask of you is military success, and I will risk the dictatorship. The government will support you to the utmost of its ability, which is neither more nor less than it has done and will do for all commanders. I much fear that the spirit which you have aided to infuse into the army, of criticizing their commander and withholding confidence from him, will now turn upon you. I shall assist you as far as I can to put it down. Neither you nor Napoleon, if he were alive again, could get any good out of an army while such a spirit prevails in it; and now

beware of rashness. Beware of rashness, but with energy and sleepless vigilance go forward and give us victories.

Yours very truly,
A. LINCOLN

Hooker was deeply touched by this fatherly counsel; but he got nowhere except to conduct a splendid parade of the army for the President's review in the first week in April, 1863. This review was remarkable because of the profound influence which the President's solemn appearance had upon the soldiers. His very face depicted all the horrors of the two awful years of war. Ira Seymour Dodd, then a soldier in the ranks, described this review from the point of view of the soldiers:

As we neared the reviewing stand, the tall figure of Lincoln loomed up. He was on horseback, and his severely plain, black, citizen's dress set him in bold relief against the crowd of generals in full uniform grouped behind him. Distinguished men were among them; but we had no eyes save for our revered President, the Commander-in-Chief of the army, the brother of every soldier, the great leader of a nation in its hour of trial. There was no time save for a marching salute; the occasion called for no cheers. Self-examination, no glorification, had brought the army and its chief together. But we passed close to him, so that he could look into our faces and we into his.

None of us to our dying day can forget that countenance! From its presence we marched directly onward toward our camp, and as soon as "route step" was ordered and the men were free to talk, they spoke thus to each other: "Did you ever see such a look on any man's face?" "He is bearing the burdens of the nation." "It is an awful load; it is killing him." "Yes, that is so; he is not long for this world!"

Davis, Lee, and Jackson, as they are to be represented on the face of Stone Mountain, Georgia, by the sculptor Augustus Lukeman.

Concentrated in that one great, strong yet tender face, the agony of the life-or-death struggle of the hour was revealed as we had never seen it before. With new understanding we knew why we were soldiers.

Hooker met Lee at Chancellorsville on May 1, 1863, and after three days of fighting with 97,000 men against 57,000, his army was put to rout with a loss of 16,000 men. The news of this defeat was a great blow to Lincoln. The one who carried it to him said:

The appearance of the President, as I read aloud these fateful words, was piteous. Never, as long as I knew him, did he seem to be so broken up, so dispirited, and so ghost-like. Clasping his hands behind his back, he walked up and down the room, saying, "My God, my God, what will the country say? What will the country say?"

Hooker was removed and General George Gordon

Meade was placed in charge, just three days before the battle of Gettysburg. This decisive battle was fought under Meade's command from July 1 to July 4, 1863. It was a Union victory and turned the tide of the war. But strange as it may seem, Meade did not follow it up; he permitted Lee to escape again at the time when the war might have been ended.

Lincoln could not help feeling that Meade willingly allowed Lee to cross the Potomac and get away. On July 15 he said in a telegram to Simon Cameron: "I would give much to be relieved of the impression that Meade, Couch, Smith, and all, since the battle at Gettysburg, have striven only to get Lee over the river without another fight." He expressed all his disappointment in a letter to Meade written on July 14:

My dear General, I do not believe you appreciate the magnitude of the misfortune involved in Lee's escape. He was within your easy grasp, and to have closed upon him would, in connection with our other late successes, have ended the war. As it is, the war will be prolonged indefinitely. If you could not safely attack Lee last Monday, how can you possibly do so south of the river, when you can take with you very few more than two thirds of the force you then had in hand? It would be unreasonable to expect and I do not expect that you can now effect much. Your golden opportunity is gone, and I am distressed immeasurably because of it.

I beg you will not consider this a prosecution or persecution of yourself. As you had learned that I was dissatisfied, I have thought it best to kindly tell you why.

Lincoln never sent the letter. It could not undo the error; and so the hurt to the general seemed worthless.

The battle of Gettysburg has come to be the most

dramatic point of the war, both because of the mighty struggle that took place and the immortal words that were spoken in dedication of the field. Lincoln's address at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863, stands as the world's greatest memorial address:

Fourscore and seven years ago, our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

July 4, 1863, was a memorable day; on it Gettysburg was won and Vicksburg taken. These were signal victories in the East and the West. Out of

the battle of Vicksburg, which left the Mississippi flowing "unvexed to the sea," Lincoln found the man for whom he was looking — Ulysses S. Grant.

Brady

General Ulysses S. Grant.

For more than two years the people had been clamoring, "Abraham Lincoln, give us a man." The man had been found. While the war had been progressing in the West just about as slowly as in the East, Grant had steadily risen to eminence from a modest beginning. He took Fort Donaldson in February, 1862, after the graphic ultimatum: "No terms except unconditional and immediate surrender. I propose to move immediately upon your works." This became a slogan of success.

Doggedly and quietly Grant forged to the front. Nothing could change him from his purpose. To him the purpose of war was to fight. In July, 1862, he was given command of the armies of the West. He was unpopular in many quarters. Serious complaints were urged against him. Lincoln liked him, however. He said, "I can't spare this man. He fights." Critics complained that Grant got drunk. Tradition has maintained that Lincoln asked what kind of whisky Grant used and intimated that he would like to send a barrel of it to all his other generals. Grant was a fighter; and that was what Lincoln needed above all else. After Vicksburg, Lincoln wrote Grant the following expression of his appreciation:

WASHINGTON, *July* 13, 1863

MAJOR GENERAL GRANT

MY DEAR GENERAL: I do not remember that you and I ever met personally. I write this now as a grateful acknowledgment for the almost inestimable service you have done the country. I wish to say a word further. When you first reached the vicinity of Vicksburg, I thought you should do what you finally did — march the troops across the neck, run the batteries with the transports, and thus go below; and I never had any faith, except a general hope that you knew better than I, that the Yazoo Pass expedition and the like could succeed. When you got below and took Port Gibson, Grand Gulf, and vicinity, I thought you should go down the river and join General Banks, and when you turned northward, east of the Big Black, I feared it was a mistake. I now wish to make the personal acknowledgment that you were right and I was wrong.

Yours very truly,
A. LINCOLN

The President decided to place Grant at the head of all his armies. Congress revived the grade of lieutenant general, and on the night of February 29, 1864, Lincoln nominated Grant to this rank which had been held by only two Americans in the field, George Washington and Winfield Scott.

On March 9, Grant and Lincoln met in Washington for the first time. Grant received his commission and was told to take Richmond. He said he could do it if he had the troops, and Lincoln said he would furnish them. From that time forth there was one persistent advance. Grant kept "pegging away." That was what Lincoln wanted. That was all Grant could do. One of Grant's dispatches furnished another slogan, "I propose to fight it out along this line, if it takes all summer." Lincoln continued to keep in close touch with movements in the field, but he made fewer suggestions. He kept his ears to the telegraph and gave every possible support, putting his trust in Grant. Here is a good illustration of his approval of Grant's bulldog tactics:

CITY POINT, VA., *August* 17, 10:30 A.M.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GRANT:

I have seen your despatch expressing your unwillingness to break your hold where you are. Neither am I willing. Hold on with a bulldog grip and chew and choke as much as possible.

A. LINCOLN

With the work of General Sherman, whom Grant had made commander of the military division of the Mississippi, he was much pleased. He sent him this notable message on the capture of Savannah:

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, *December* 26, 1864

MY DEAR GENERAL SHERMAN:

Many, many thanks for your Christmas gift, the capture of Savannah.

When you were about leaving Atlanta for the Atlantic coast, I was anxious, if not fearful; but feeling that you were the better judge, and remembering that "nothing risked, nothing gained," I did not interfere. Now, the undertaking being a success, the honor is all yours; for I believe none of us went further than to acquiesce.

And taking the work of General Thomas into the count, as it should be taken, it is indeed a great success. Not only does it afford the obvious and immediate military advantages; but in showing to the world that your army could be divided, putting the stronger part to an important new service, and yet leaving enough to vanquish the old opposing force of the whole, — Hood's army, — it brings those who sat in darkness to see a great light. But what next?

I suppose it will be safe if I leave General Grant and yourself to decide.

Please make my grateful acknowledgments to your whole army — officers and men.

Yours very truly,
A. LINCOLN

To the soldiers Lincoln was always "Father Abraham." They loved him and liked to see him either in the field or in the hospitals. He sympathized with their hardships and praised all their endeavors. The officers complained that he broke discipline by his clemency to individual soldiers who got into trouble for desertion, sleeping on duty, and so forth. A few examples taken from the record of a single month — November, 1864 — show his use of executive clemency.

November 1, 1864

MAJOR GENERAL DIX, NEW YORK:

Please suspend execution of Private P. Carrol until further order. Acknowledge receipt.

A. LINCOLN

November 2, 1864

LIEUTENANT GENERAL GRANT, CITY POINT:

Suspend until further order the execution of Nathan Wilcox of Twenty-second Massachusetts Regiment, Fifth Corps, said to be at Repair Depot.

A. LINCOLN

November 4, 1864

MAJOR GENERAL BURBRIDGE, LEXINGTON, KY.:

Suspend execution of all the deserters ordered to be executed on Sunday at Louisville, until further order, and send me the records in the cases. Acknowledge receipt.

A. LINCOLN

November 10, 1864

MAJOR GENERAL ROSECRANS, SAINT LOUIS, MO.:

Suspend execution of Major Wolf until further order and meanwhile report to me on the case.

A. LINCOLN

November 19, 1864

OFFICER IN COMMAND AT DAVENPORT, IOWA:

Let the Indian "Big Eagle" be discharged. I ordered this some time ago.

A. LINCOLN

November 24, 1864

OFFICER IN COMMAND AT FORT SNELLING, MINN.:

Suspend execution of Patrick Kelly, John Lennor, Joel H. Eastwood, Thomas J. Murray, and Hoffman until further order from here.

A. LINCOLN

November 26, 1864

MAJOR GENERAL ROSECRANS:

Please telegraph me briefly on what charge and evidence Mrs. Anna B. Martin has been sent to the Penitentiary at Alton.

A. LINCOLN

Once a distracted mother whose son was to be executed the next day appealed to the President but was unable to tell where his regiment was or in what division the execution was to take place. Stanton was disgusted, but Lincoln towered above him with the order: "Send this message to every headquarters, every fort, and every camp in the United States: 'Let no military execution take place until further order from me. A. LINCOLN.'"

Lincoln visiting a camp of the Army of the Potomac. After a war-time drawing.

These suspensions nearly always resulted in complete pardons. The father of a boy whose execution was stayed by the President's order was told by Lincoln: "If your boy never dies until I order him to be shot, he'll live to be older than Methuselah."

He was especially tender to sick or unfortunate soldiers, either Union or Confederate. A boy soldier who escorted Lincoln through the hospital at City Point, Virginia, said:

> I could not but note his gentleness, his friendly greetings to the sick and wounded. When we came to some wards of sick and wounded Southern soldiers, I told him he wouldn't want to go in there because there were only rebels. I will never forget how he stopped and gently laid his large hand upon my shoulder and quietly answered, "You mean Confederates." And I have meant Confederates ever since.

When companies were being mustered out in Washington, the President often addressed them in kind and encouraging words. He used these opportunities to explain the purposes of the war and to assert the principles of free government. To a regiment of Ohio "hundred days men" he said on August 18, 1864:

> Soldiers: You are about to return to your homes and your friends, after having, as I learn, performed in camp a comparatively short term of duty in this great contest. I am greatly obliged to you, and to all who have come forward at the call of their country. I wish it to be more generally understood what the country is now engaged in. We have, as all will agree, a free government, where every man has a right to be equal with every other man. In this great struggle this form of government and every

form of human rights are endangered if our enemies succeed. There is more involved in this contest than is realized by everyone. There is involved in this struggle the question whether your children and my children shall enjoy the privileges we have enjoyed. I say this in order to impress upon you, if you are not already so impressed, that no small matter should divert us from our great purpose.

On another occasion, when it was being reported that the South intended to make the slaves fight for them, he said to a group of soldiers:

I may incidentally remark, that having in my life heard many arguments — or strings of words meant to pass for arguments — intended to show that the negro ought to be a slave — if he shall now really fight to keep himself a slave, it will be a far better argument why he should remain a slave than I have ever before heard. He, perhaps, ought to be a slave if he desires it ardently enough to fight for it. Or, if one out of four will, for his own freedom, fight to keep the other three in slavery, he ought to be a slave for his selfish meanness. I have always thought that all men should be free; but if any should be slaves, it should be first those who desire it for themselves, and secondly those who desire it for others. Whenever I hear anyone arguing for slavery, I feel a strong impulse to see it tried on him personally.

Throughout all the terrible struggle the President never lost his sense of humor. On one occasion just after a serious disaster a radical member of Congress called upon him, and Mr. Lincoln commenced telling an anecdote. The Congressman rose to his feet and said, "Mr. President, I did not come here this morning to hear stories; it is too serious a time." Instantly the smile disappeared from the President's

face and he exclaimed, "A——, sit down! I respect you as an earnest, sincere man. You cannot be more anxious than I am constantly, and I say to you now that were it not for this occasional vent I should die!"

During his greatest disappointments with his generals, he frequently made jokes about the situation. Once when viewing the great Army of the Potomac, a regular tented city, he waved his hand toward it and said, "That is McClellan's bodyguard." On another occasion he said that if "McClellan didn't have any use for the army, he would be glad to borrow it for a day or two."

When he was told that a brigadier general and twelve army mules had been carried off by a Confederate raid, he said, "How unfortunate! Those mules cost us two hundred dollars apiece!"

A visitor once asked him how many men the rebels had in the field and the President replied, very seriously, "Twelve hundred thousand, according to the best authority." The visitor expressed surprise, and Lincoln went on: "Yes, sir, twelve hundred thousand — no doubt of it. You see, all of our generals, when they get whipped, say the enemy outnumbers them from three or five to one, and I must believe them. We have four hundred thousand men in the field, and three times four make twelve. Don't you see it?"

Amid all the troubles of the war it was the President's great task to keep everything safely balanced at home and abroad. He guided the nation through troubled foreign waters in the Trent Affair with England, and through all our relationships with France and Russia. It was his good sense that

kept the border states — Kentucky, Maryland, and Missouri — out of the Confederacy. He considered everything in its place as patiently as possible, but always kept in view his main object — the winning of the war. Once when a committee from the West came with a complaint of their own, he said:

Gentlemen, suppose all the property you were worth was in gold and you had put it in the hands of Blondin, to carry across the Niagara River on a rope. Would you shake the cable or keep shouting at him, "Blondin, stand up a little straighter — Blondin, stoop a little more — go a little faster — lean a little more to the north — lean a little more to the south"? No, you would hold your breath as well as your tongue, and keep your hands off until he was safe over. The Government is carrying an enormous weight. Untold treasures are in their hands; they are doing the very best they can. Don't badger them. Keep silence, and we will get you safe across.

Some radicals in Congress — among them Sumner, Stevens, and Wilson — were great pests. These three often came upon him together. One day, when Senator Henderson of Missouri was in the President's office, Lincoln told him the following story of his Hoosier school days:

Our reading was done from the Scriptures, and we stood up in a long line and read in turn from the Bible. Our lesson one day was the story of the faithful Israelites who were thrown into the fiery furnace and delivered by the hand of the Lord without so much as the smell of fire upon their garments. It fell to one little fellow to read the verse in which occurred, for the first time, the names of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.

Little Bud stumbled on Shadrach, floundered on Meshach, and went all to pieces on Abednego. Instantly

the hand of the master dealt him a cuff on the side of the head and left him, wailing and blubbering, as the next boy in line took up the reading. But before the girl at the end of the line had done reading, he had subsided into sniffles and finally became quiet. His blunder and disgrace were forgotten by the class until his turn was approaching to read again. Then, like a thunderclap out of a clear sky, he set up a wail that alarmed the master, who with rather unusual gentleness inquired, "What's the matter now?"

The little boy pointed with shaking finger to the verse which in a few moments he would be expected to read, and to the three proper names which it contained.

"Look, master," he cried, "there comes them same three fellers again!"

As Lincoln finished the story, he stepped to the window overlooking Pennsylvania Avenue, and pointed his finger at three men who were then crossing the street to the White House — Charles Sumner, Thaddeus Stevens, and Henry Wilson.

Lincoln had to bear the brunt of a most trying election at a very critical period of the war, during the summer and fall of 1864. One of his quaint sayings became the slogan for the campaign: "It is not wise to swap horses while crossing a stream."

The outcome of the war was inevitable, notwithstanding all the dark periods. Lincoln relied upon right and might. There were eleven seceding states against twenty-three that remained in the Union. After the admission of West Virginia, in 1863, and of Nevada, in 1864, there were twenty-five Union states. The population of the North was twenty-two millions and of the South, nine millions. The North had much greater wealth and resources, but the South had some advantages. The South fought on the

defensive. The Southern people were resisting invasion — defending their homes. There seemed to be a more united spirit in the South than in the North. The traditional chivalry of the South gave Southern leaders a more united following. The Southern people had great faith in their generals, particularly in Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson.

Abraham Lincoln was the master strategist of the war. He was the higher command. His large vision determined the main lines of the war. His plan prevailed. He proceeded with the utmost caution when caution was necessary; but as his plans steadily developed toward maturity, he became ever more positive. It was his grim duty to end the war with a decisive victory. The end of the war was approaching the first week of April, 1865. When Grant transmitted Sheridan's report, "If the thing is pressed, I think that Lee will surrender," Lincoln grimly ordered, "Let the thing be pressed."

Fighting gallantly to the end, Lee surrendered at Appomattox on April 9, 1865. Richmond had fallen on April 2. Lincoln visited the captured capital in person on April 4 and remained there two days looking into the situation and planning how to begin peaceful reconstruction. The colored people welcomed him as a Messiah.

The President's heart was filled with gratitude at the promise of peace. He gave unstinted praise to all who had taken part in the war. Especially was he grateful to Divine Providence. He ordered a day of thanksgiving, just as in the beginning he had ordered a day of fasting. No one had felt the awful strain as

he had. In the loss of his son, Willie, who died in the White House, February 12, 1862, in his twelfth year, he felt all the grief of all the parents who lost sons in the war. Those nearest to him had noted a greater reliance on the Supreme Being from that time forth.

His letter to Mrs. Bixby, of which a copy hangs in the halls of Oxford University, is a supreme expression of heartfelt sympathy:

Lincoln, with one of the Union generals, meeting Alan Pinkerton (left). Pinkerton was the chief of the Federal Secret Service during the war between the states. Engraving from a war-time photograph by Brady.

EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, *November* 21, 1864

DEAR MADAM — I have been shown, in the files of the War Department, a statement of the Adjutant General of Massachusetts, that you are the mother of five sons who have died gloriously on the field of battle. I feel how weak and fruitless must be any words of mine which should attempt to beguile you from the grief of a loss so

overwhelming. But I can not refrain from tendering to you the consolation that may be found in the thanks of the Republic they died to save. I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement, and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours, to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom.

Yours very sincerely and respectfully,

A. LINCOLN

The war had not officially ended when he again took the oath of office, March 4, 1865; but the end was in sight. His Second Inaugural Address may be taken as the best review that has ever been written of that mighty struggle:

SECOND INAUGURAL ADDRESS

Delivered March 4, 1865

FELLOW COUNTRYMEN:

At this second appearing to take the oath of the presidential office, there is less occasion for an extended address than there was at the first. Then a statement, somewhat in detail, of a course to be pursued seemed very fitting and proper. Now, at the expiration of four years, during which public declarations have been constantly called forth on every point and phase of the great contest which still absorbs the attention and engrosses the energies of the nation, little that is new could be presented.

The progress of our arms, upon which all else chiefly depends, is as well known to the public as to myself, and it is, I trust, reasonably satisfactory and encouraging to all. With high hope for the future, no prediction in regard to it is ventured.

On the occasion corresponding to this four years ago, all thoughts were anxiously directed to an impending civil war. All dreaded it; all sought to avoid it. While the inaugural address was being delivered from this place, devoted altogether to saving the Union without war,

insurgent agents were in the city seeking to destroy it with war — seeking to dissolve the Union and divide the effects by negotiation. Both parties deprecated war, but one of them would make war rather than let the nation survive, and the other would accept war rather than let it perish, and the war came. One eighth of the whole population were colored slaves, not distributed generally over the Union, but localized in the southern part of it. These slaves constituted a peculiar and powerful interest. All knew that this interest was somehow the cause of the war. To strengthen, perpetuate, and extend this interest was the object for which the insurgents would rend the Union by war, while the Government claimed no right to do more than to restrict the territorial enlargement of it.

Neither party expected for the war the magnitude or the duration which it has already attained. Neither anticipated that the cause of the conflict might cease when, or even before, the conflict itself should cease. Each looked for an easier triumph, and a result less fundamental and astounding. Both read the same Bible and pray to the same God, and each invokes His aid against the other. It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces, but let us judge not, that we be not judged. The prayer of both could not be answered. That of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offences, for it must needs be that offences come, but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!" If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offences which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which having continued through His appointed time, He now wills to remove, and that He gives to both North and South this terrible war as the woe due to those by whom the offence came, shall we discern there any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to Him? Fondly do we hope,

fervently do we pray, that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword, as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said that the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow and his orphan — to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and a lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

MAN OF THE AGES

Much of the mystery that has surrounded the story of Abraham Lincoln is due to the deep contradictions of his nature and of his career. The story of his life is an open book; but the different interpretations of it are endless. Few men have been as guileless; and few, as little understood. In his make-up there were the extremes of simplicity and complexity; his mind was simple, but he had the spirit of a mystic.

He rose from very low to very high station. In his lowly life he showed supreme elevation of spirit; in his lofty station he practiced the deepest humility. He was great in the log cabin and humble in the White House.

Although very homely and awkward, Lincoln possessed an indescribable charm both of expression and bearing. His strength was that of a giant, but his touch was gentle as a woman's. His heart was so tender that he could not bear to see even a brute creature suffer. The following incidents are as suggestive of Lincoln's character as are any of the famous deeds of his life.

When the Lincoln family was moving from Indiana to Illinois in the spring of 1830, a little pet dog fell behind one day and was left on the other side of a swollen, ice-filled stream. It yelped so piteously that Abraham waded across the stream and returned with the shivering animal under his arm. He said

long afterward, "His frantic leaps of joy and other evidences of a dog's gratitude amply repaid me for all the exposure I had undergone."

Once when riding on horseback with others through a grove, Lincoln noticed a little bird that had fallen from the nest and lay fluttering on the ground. After riding a short distance, he turned back to pick up the little fledgling and put it in the nest. When he rejoined the party, they said, "Why, Lincoln, you need not have stopped for such a trifle as that." After a pause he answered quietly, "Well, I feel better for doing it, anyhow."

He once leaped from a stage in which he was riding, and waded over his shoe tops in mud to pull out a pig that was struggling to free itself from the mire. "If I had left that little fellow in there, the memory of his squealing would have made me uncomfortable all day," he said. "That is why I freed him."

Yet the man who could not endure the suffering of dog, bird, or pig, formed armies and directed battles in which thousands upon thousands of his fellow men were killed in the most cruel manner. Duty was stronger than natural sympathy for suffering.

Without the advantages of education he cultivated his mind to the finest appreciation of great literature. His own language ranged from the crudest of jokes to the utmost elegance of expression. The Gettysburg Address is blank verse of superior literary quality. He did not believe it was a success. He said, using the figure of a rusty hoe or plow, that it wouldn't "scour." Although he could speak and write profusely, he loved terse and simple language.

He complimented the telegraph operators of the War Department and said that their concise language reminded him of a Scotch story: A lassie was crossing a stream, carrying eggs to market, when a Scotchman on the bank called out, "How deep's the brook and what's the price of eggs?" "Knee deep and a sixpence," she said without looking up. Both in tone and subject Lincoln's speech could pass almost instantly from one extreme of levity or seriousness to the other. In his darkest hours he drew consolation from the humor of Artemus Ward and Petroleum Nasby and from the lessons of the Bible.

Lincoln found most of his subjects for thought in the common things around him; yet he was capable of receiving profound impressions from great phenomena. When he first saw Niagara Falls in September, 1848, he wrote the following comment:

> Its power to excite reflection and emotion is its great charm. The geologist will demonstrate that the plunge, or fall, was once at Lake Ontario, and has worn its way back to its present position; he will ascertain how fast it is wearing now, and so get a basis for determining how long it has been wearing back from Lake Ontario, and finally demonstrate by it that this world is at least fourteen thousand years old. A philosopher of a slightly different turn will say, "Niagara Falls is only the lip of the basin out of which pours all the surplus water which rains down on the earth's surface." He will estimate with approximate accuracy that five hundred thousand tons of water fall with their full weight a distance of a hundred feet each minute — thus exerting a force equal to the lifting of the same weight, through the same space, in the same time. . . .

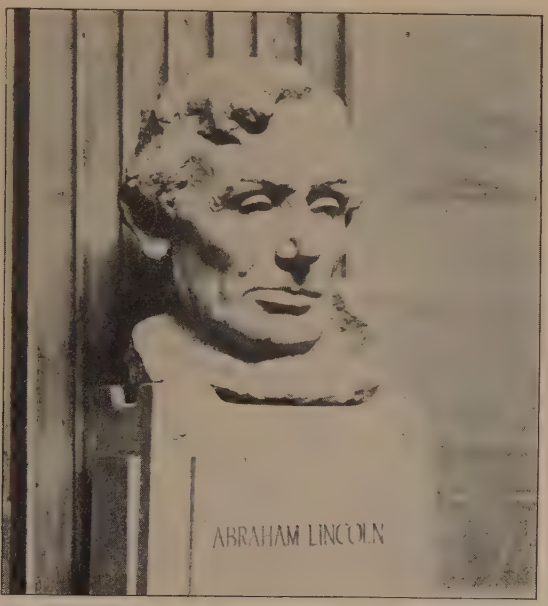
But still there is more. It calls up the indefinite past. When Columbus first sought this continent — when Christ suffered on the cross — when Moses led Israel through the Red Sea — nay, even when Adam first came from the hand of his Maker; then, as now, Niagara was roaring here. The eyes of that species of extinct giants whose bones fill the mounds of America have gazed on Niagara, as ours do now. Contemporary with the first race of men, and older than the first man, Niagara is strong and fresh today as ten thousand years ago. The mammoth and mastodon, so long dead that fragments of their monstrous bones alone testify that they ever lived, have gazed on Niagara — in that long, long time never still for a single moment, never dried, never froze, never slept, never rested.

Although Lincoln reasoned mostly from material facts in a shrewd and practical manner, yet he indulged in dreams and visions almost to the point of superstition. He was a non-conformist in religious matters and was often charged with infidelity, yet he habitually expressed reverence that was sublime in its faith and meaning. His faith amounted almost to fatalism. He accepted the war and its vicissitudes as the will of God.

In September, 1862, he wrote the following analysis of his faith, which was found after his death:

The will of God prevails. In great contests each claims to act in accordance with the will of God. Both may be and one must be wrong. God cannot be for and against the same thing at the same time. In the present civil war it is quite possible that God's purpose is something different from the purposes of either party, and yet the human instrumentalities, working just as they do, are of the best adaptation to effect His purpose. I am almost ready to say that this is probably true, that God wills this

contest, and wills that it shall not end yet. By His mere great power on the minds of the contestants, He could have either saved or destroyed the Union without a human contest. Yet the contest began, and, having begun, He could give the final victory to either side any day. Yet the contest proceeds.



A colossal head of Lincoln, sculptured in marble by Gutzon Borglum, as it is to be seen in the rotunda of the Capitol at Washington.

He believed in the God of the Bible all his life, and in his darkest hours he turned to that Supreme Being in the same spirit with which his humble parents had always done.

When the colored people of Baltimore presented him with a Bible in October, 1864, he said to them, in part:

In regard to the Great Book, I have only to say that it is the best gift which God has given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book. But for this book, we could not know right from wrong. All those things to man are contained in it.

It was about this time that he made the following declaration of his faith:

That the Almighty does make use of human agencies and directly intervenes in human affairs is one of the plainest statements of the Bible. I have had so many evidences of His direction, so many instances when I have been controlled by some other power than my own will, that I cannot doubt that this power comes from above. I frequently see my way clear to a decision when I am conscious that I have not sufficient facts upon which to found it. . . . I am satisfied that when the Almighty wants me to do or not to do a particular thing, He finds a way of letting me know it.

Lincoln's favorite poem was William Knox's melancholy lines on "Mortality," which he first read in a newspaper about the time of Ann Rutledge's death:

Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a fast-flitting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,
He passeth from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,
Be scatter'd around and together be laid;
And the young and the old, and the low and the high,
Shall molder to dust and together shall lie.

The child that a mother attended and loved,
The mother, that infant's affection who proved,
The husband, that mother and infant who bless'd,
Each, all, are away to their dwellings of rest.

The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow, in whose eye,
Shone beauty and pleasure, — her triumphs are by;
And the memory of those who have loved her and praised,
Are alike from the minds of the living erased.

The hand of the king that the scepter hath borne,
The brow of the priest that the miter hath worn,
The eye of the sage, and the heart of the brave,
Are hidden and lost in the depths of the grave.

The peasant whose lot was to sow and to reap,
The herdsman who climb'd with his goats to the steep,
The beggar who wander'd in search of his bread,
Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

The saint who enjoy'd the communion of heaven,
The sinner who dared to remain unforgiven,
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,
Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.

So the multitude goes, like the flower and the weed,
That wither away to let others succeed;
So the multitude comes, even those we behold,
To repeat every tale that hath often been told.

For we are the same things our fathers have been,
We see the same sights that our fathers have seen,
We drink the same stream, and we feel the same sun,
And run the same course that our fathers have run.

The thoughts we are thinking our fathers would think;
From the death we are shrinking from, they too would
shrink;
To the life we are clinging to, they too would cling;
But it speeds from the earth like a bird on the wing.

They loved, but their story we cannot unfold;
They scorn'd, but the heart of the haughty is cold;
They grieved, but no wail from their slumbers will come;
They joy'd, but the voice of their gladness is dumb.

They died, — ay! they died; and we things that are now,
Who walk on the turf that lies over their brow,
Who make in their dwellings a transient abode,
Meet the changes they met on their pilgrimage road.

Yea, hope and despondence, and pleasure and pain,
Are mingled together in sunshine and rain;
And the smile and the tear, the song and the dirge,
Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.

'Tis the twink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath,
From the blossom of health to the paleness of death,
From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud, —
Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

He recited this poem aloud in whole or in part numberless times to himself or for the hearing of others, through a period of more than thirty years of his life. He said: "I would give all I am worth, and go in debt, to be able to write so fine a piece as I think this is." He gave copies of it written in his own hand to several different people. One of these hand-written copies is in the Barrett collection. A study of this poem makes it easy to believe that melancholy could have really "dripped" at times from Lincoln — a keen lover of humor. The poem, however, expresses that sense of the unimportance of trifles — that sense of proportion — that is often, as it was in Lincoln's case, the basis of a real sense of humor.

His ambition was towering, but he was wholly without vanity. In his first public address as a candidate for office, he said, "I am humble Abraham Lincoln." He remained so all his life.

So cautious on occasion that he was accused of cowardice, he displayed courage that is the wonder

The Lincoln Memorial at Washington, a symbol of the restored Union. Thirty-six great columns represent the number of states at the time of Lincoln's death. Within is a colossal statue by Daniel C. French, representing Lincoln seated. The architect of the building was Henry Bacon.

of all ages. So hesitant at times that he seemed weak and vacillating, he held to his main purposes with a will that nothing could shake. Few men have been scorned and vilified as he was, and none holds a warmer place in the heart of mankind.

England's critical attitude toward Lincoln during the war was expressed glaringly in the sneering jokes and grotesque cartoons of London's *Punch*. But the writer who was responsible for most of this slander wrote, immediately after Lincoln's death, a poem which may be taken as Britannia's tribute and *Punch's* amends. It follows in part:

> Yes, he had lived to shame me from my sneer,
> To lame my pencil, and confute my pen —
> To make me own this hind of princes peer,
> This rail splitter a true-born king of men.
>
> . . . . . .

So he grew up, a destined work to do,
And lived to do it; four long-suffering years'
Ill-fate, ill-feeling, ill-report lived through,
And then he heard the hisses change to cheers,

. . . . . .

The Old World and the New, from sea to sea,
Utter one voice of sympathy and shame!
Sore heart, so stopped when it at last beat high,
Sad life, cut short just as its triumph came.

His second election was a towering triumph, which he acknowledged only in a spirit of humble thanksgiving. He said:

I am thankful to God for this approval of the people; but, while deeply grateful for this mark of their confidence in me, if I know my heart, my gratitude is free from any taint of personal triumph. I do not impugn the motives of any one opposed to me. It is no pleasure to me to triumph over any one, but I give thanks to the Almighty for this evidence of the people's resolution to stand by free government and the rights of humanity.

He wielded greater and more arbitrary power than any ruler of earth, and he wielded it whenever possible on the side of mercy.

No one could have known the weaknesses of humanity better than he, for he had dwelt among all kinds of people; but he had unbounded faith in them and their judgments. He said, "You can fool all of the people part of the time, and part of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time."

He yielded easily on all minor matters, but on fundamental principles he was always firm as a rock. He endured slights of subordinates with a meek

forbearance such as no other President before or since has ever done; but in matters of real importance he spoke out with a classic dignity equal to that of Washington or Wilson, and with a tone of authority that might have become Jackson or Roosevelt. Once when a crisis threatened because of a squabble in the Cabinet, he gave his official family the following ultimatum:

> I must myself be the judge how long to retain in and when to remove any of you from his position. It would greatly pain me to discover any of you endeavoring to procure another's removal, or in any way to prejudice him before the public. Such endeavor would be a wrong to me, and, much worse, a wrong to the country. My wish is that on this subject no remark be made nor question asked by any of you, here or elsewhere, now or hereafter.

He trusted greatly to Secretary Seward, but on the occasion when he let Seward meet the Confederate commissioners to consider terms of peace, January 1, 1865, he bound his Secretary with the most rigid instructions, closing with these words: "You are to hear all they may choose to say, and report to me. You will not assume to definitely consummate anything."

When Grant telegraphed Confederate peace overtures some weeks later, Lincoln wrote in his own handwriting, without consulting Stanton, a dispatch which he handed to Stanton for his signature:

> The President directs me to say that he wishes you to have no conference with General Lee, unless it be for capitulation of General Lee's army, or on some minor or purely military matter. He instructs me to say that you are not to decide, discuss, or confer upon any political

The interior of the Lincoln Memorial Building at Washington, showing the colossal marble statue by Daniel C. French. The inscription above the statue reads as follows: "In this temple as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever."

questions. Such questions the President holds in his own hands, and will submit them to no military conferences or conventions. Meanwhile, you are to press to the utmost your military advantages.

Lincoln knew the lessons of history and could apply them with great readiness. He liked history that was live and interesting, and had little sympathy for scholars who made facts appear meaningless and uninteresting. Once at a diplomatic dinner he criticized a Greek history for its tediousness, whereupon a highly educated diplomat defended the author as one of the profoundest scholars of the age. "Indeed," he said, "it may be doubted whether any man

of our generation has plunged more deeply in the fount of learning." "Yes, or come up drier," said Lincoln.

Lincoln's sound knowledge of history was often apparent in situations where he had only his keen wit and good memory to prompt his remarks.

During the Douglas debates Douglas compared their campaign to the siege of Sebastopol in the Crimean War. The Lincoln supporters, he said, were like the allied army; and he declared that he would deal with them as the Russians had dealt with the allies at Sebastopol. When they fired a broadside, they did not stop to inquire whether it hit an Englishman, a Frenchman, or a Turk. Lincoln was quick to respond: "In that case, I beg he will indulge us while we suggest to him that these allies took Sebastopol."

Again, at Hampton Roads, when the question arose as to the propriety of the government's treating with warring subjects, one of the Confederate representatives gave as a precedent the case of Charles I treating with his rebellious Parliament. Whereupon Lincoln with a twinkle in his eye gravely remarked that Charles I had lost his head.

He was capable of the strongest loves and the deepest hates; but his hates were wholly impersonal — hatred of wrong and injustice, of slavery and treason. He held no malice toward individuals. The closing words of his Second Inaugural Address, "With malice toward none, with charity for all," expressed the spirit that dominated him entirely during the closing days of the war. His attitude was altogether that of gladness and thanksgiving, forgiveness and mercy.

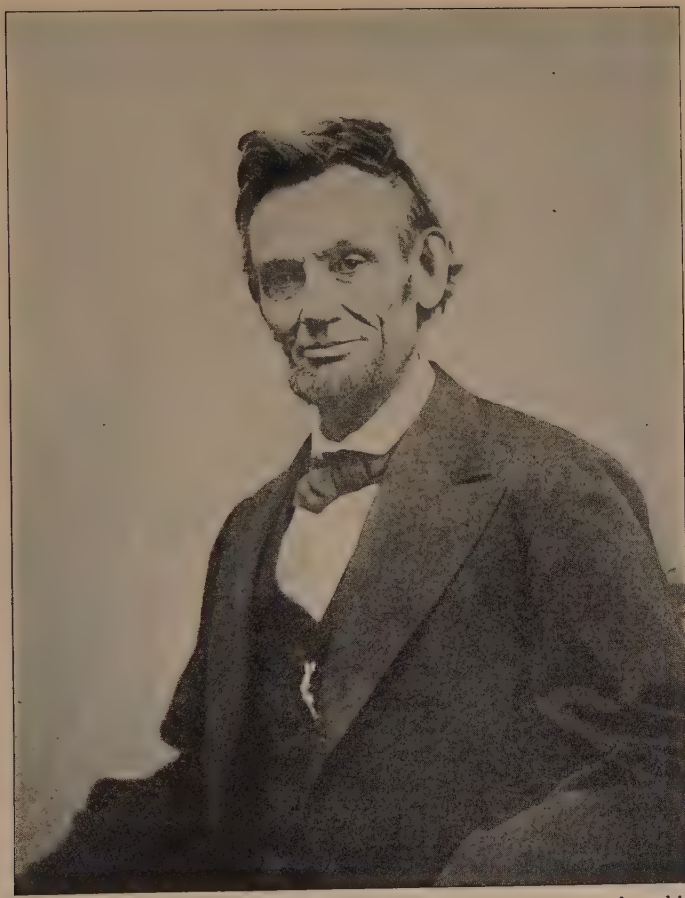
On the tenth of April, 1865, the people of Washington, rejoicing over the surrender of Lee, serenaded the White House. Lincoln spoke briefly from the window above the main entrance:

I am very greatly rejoiced that an occasion has occurred so pleasurable that the people can't restrain themselves. I suppose that arrangements are being made for some sort of formal demonstration, perhaps this evening or tomorrow night. If there should be such a demonstration I, of course, shall have to respond to it, and I shall have nothing to say if I dribble it out before. [Laughter and cries of, "We want to hear you now," etc.] I see you have a band. ["We have three of them."] I propose now closing up by requesting you to play a certain air, or tune. I have always thought "Dixie" one of the best tunes I ever heard. [Laughter.]

I have heard that our adversaries over the way have attempted to appropriate it as a national air. I insisted yesterday that we had fairly captured it. I presented the question to the Attorney General, and he gave his opinion that it is our lawful prize. [Laughter and cheers.] I ask the band to give us a good turn upon it.

On the next evening, Tuesday, April 11, Mr. Lincoln was again serenaded by a great crowd. On this occasion he delivered his last speech, the opening paragraph of which follows:

We meet this evening not in sorrow, but in gladness of heart. The evacuation of Petersburg and Richmond, and the surrender of the principal insurgent army, give hope of a righteous and speedy peace, whose joyous expression cannot be restrained. In the midst of this, however, He from whom all blessings flow must not be forgotten. A call for a national thanksgiving is being prepared, and will be duly promulgated. Nor must those whose harder part gives us the cause of rejoicing be overlooked. Their



The smiling Lincoln. The President was assassinated the day after this photograph was taken.

honors must not be parceled out with others. I myself was near the front, and had the high pleasure of transmitting much of the good news to you; but no part of the honor, for plan or execution, is mine. To General Grant, his skillful officers, and brave men, all belongs.

He began devoting himself entirely to thoughts of reconstruction — "binding up the nation's wounds." There was no vindictiveness, no triumph over a fallen foe. When the question arose as to what should be done with Confederate officials who might be captured, he told the story of an Irishman who became very thirsty after taking the temperance pledge and, ordering a glass of lemonade, whispered to the bartender to slip in a little whisky "unbeknownced to meself." Lincoln wanted these captives to get away. Senator Sumner remembered long afterward that when someone remarked to the President that Jefferson Davis ought to be hanged, Lincoln replied, "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

The President's last Cabinet meeting was on Good Friday, April 14, 1865. It was a day of rare good feeling, in which the President indulged to the utmost. General Grant came to the city that day bringing his aide-de-camp, Captain Robert Lincoln, with him. They had a delightful hour at the White House before the meeting of the Cabinet.

The President spoke with great earnestness to the Cabinet upon the importance of ending all strife and avoiding the shedding of any more blood. "No one need expect that he would take any part in hanging or killing any of these men, even the worst of them. Enough lives have been sacrificed. We must ex-

tinguish our resentments if we expect harmony and union." Such was the tenor of his thoughts. He did not wish that the autonomy of the states should be disturbed. All must now begin to act in the interest of peace.

At this Cabinet meeting he related a strange dream of the night before. It was the same dream that had come to him just before many important events of the war. The Secretary of the Navy, Mr. Welles, wrote the account of it as follows:

> He said it was in my department, it related to the water, that he seemed to be in a singular vessel, but always the same, and that he was moving with great rapidity toward a dark and indefinite shore; that he had had this singular dream preceding the firing on Sumter, the battles of Bull Run, Antietam, Gettysburg, Stone River, Vicksburg, Wilmington, etc. . . . Victory did not always follow his dream, but the event and results were important.

The President seemed to feel a simple curiosity as to what important event was impending.

From the hour of his first election plots of assassination had constantly threatened the life of Abraham Lincoln. He had even had dreams and premonitions which suggested his assassination, but he had never seemed to fear it. Certainly there had been no time during the past four years when such a menace seemed less imminent than on this Good Friday, April 14, 1865.

In the afternoon he had a very enjoyable drive with Mrs. Lincoln, during which he talked cheerfully of the end of his term when they would go back to their home in Illinois to a life of peace and quiet.

He gave the evening to his favorite enjoyment, attending a play in Ford's Theater. The play was a light comic opera, "Our American Cousin," which he had seen before. A few minutes after ten, when the play was at its high point of interest in the third act, Lincoln was leaning forward on the railing of his theater box, apparently enjoying the play with all his spirit. John Wilkes Booth, a young actor belonging to a family of famous actors, entered the President's box from the rear and, placing a derringer pistol near the back of his head, fired one shot. Lincoln's head dropped slightly forward and his eyes closed. He never regained consciousness. He was carried across the street into a private room where he lay moaning throughout the night, attended by physicians, surgeons, Mrs. Lincoln and Robert, and most of his Cabinet. At 7:22 in the morning of April 15, 1865, he passed away.

Edwin M. Stanton, draping an American flag over the body of the President, pronounced that benediction to which each year has given increased significance: "Now he belongs to the ages."

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